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ABSTRACT

A collection of group disussion topics, developed and field-tested by a group of Iowa teachers, is presented in this guide. Twenty-eight topics for K-6 students, 24 topics for K-12 students, and 7 topics for students in grades 7-12 are included. Warm-up activities are given for introducing some of the topics, and lists of questions to provoke discussion are given for all of the topics. The questions for each topic are arranged in three categories (define, personalize, and challenge) and allow the discussion to move from the simple answer to a higher order of questioning and response. In addition to the above-mentioned topics, 39 topics for elementary students and 19 topics for secondary students are presented as a list of open-ended class meeting ideas. A worksheet is provided for teachers to aid in developing their own topics and questions. The last section of this document contains additional topics and activities suitable for the secondary grades. A sequence of activities and discussions helps the group progress from nonthreatening topics to higher-risk topics. The sequence begins with trying a new food and proceeds to trying new behavioral patterns. This document is part of a collection of materials from the Iowa Area Education Agency 7 Teacher Center project. (EM)

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# Group Discussion Topics

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# GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS

REVISED EDITION

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# CLASS DISCUSSION TOPICS

DEVELOPED AND FIELD-TESTED BY TEACHERS IN AREA EDUCATION AGENCY 7:


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# CLASS DISCUSSIONS

## DESCRIPTION

A class discussion involves a class size group, including teacher and students, assembled for the purpose of spending time to talk and listen to each other while discussing a topic or concern that is important and relevant to the group. It is the group leader's responsibility to create some warm-up or group "jell" activity to prepare the climate for an effective discussion.

Initially the discussion is led by the teacher, but as discussion skills are gained and interest develops, leadership may be expanded to include students. When this occurs the leadership team has responsibility for planning and evaluating each discussion. The actual discussion may be co-led or the role of leader may be rotated between members of the Leadership Team. The leader's role is always "professionally non-judgmental"; that is, never commenting on the rightness or wrongness or intelligence level of the content of an answer. The physical setting of the discussion is eminently important. Here the ideal is a circle where all participants are equal, everyone can be seen and heard. This is especially important in the beginning when skills are being learned. If it is absolutely impossible to have a circle, an arrangement which comes as close as possible to this ideal is desirable.

## PURPOSES OF DISCUSSIONS

The purposes of class discussions are:

To provide an opportunity for success experiences for each student through participation by talking and/or listening.

To promote a positive self-concept for each student: "What I have to say is accepted and worthwhile."

To build involvement - a trusting, caring relationship between teacher and students, and among students.

To provide opportunities for insightful, creative, critical and divergent thinking.

To furnish a channel for relevancy through discussion of subjects interesting and exciting to students.

To build communication skills: listening, verbal fluency within the group, and language development.

To learn the process of respectful interaction.

To increase class cohesiveness and unity.

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Resource Book for Class Discussion, Educator Training Center, 100 E. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 908, Long Beach, California 90801.

# CLASS DISCUSSION

## TOPICS

SUGGESTED LEVEL

K - 6

Contributed by: Eleanor Close
Mary Lowell

# DRINK A MAGIC POTION AND BECOME INVISIBLE

Warm-up Activity: To initiate the idea, teacher could have an empty chair and talk and act as though someone was there.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a potion?
2. What is magic?
3. What is invisible?
4. What are some different kinds of magic?

Personalize:
1. Have you seen magic?
2. Have you seen a magic potion?
3. Have you ever tried to make a magic potion?
4. Have you ever played that you were invisible?
5. Would you like being invisible?

Challenge:
1. How would you handle the class if the teacher were invisible?
2. Can invisible see invisible?
3. How would people know you were there?
4. Will you be able to touch people?
5. What would it be like if everyone was invisible for twenty-four hours.

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Eleanor Close
Mary Lowell

# WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE DIDN'T HAVE FIRE?

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is fire?
2. Where do fires start?
3. Why do fires start?
4. Who uses fires?
5. What are some uses of fire?

Personalize:
1. How does fire affect your life?
2. When is fire most important to you?
3. When do you use fire?
4. Have you ever seen fire used to entertain?
5. Have you ever been harmed by fire?

Challenge:
1. When is a fire against the law?
2. What would happen if we didn't have fire?
3. Is there anything that can't be destroyed by fire?
4. If one thing could be chosen to be saved from fire, what should it be?
5. Does our government have a responsibility for fire prevention in our society?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Eleanor Close
Mary Lowell

WHO DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON WHO LIVED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS?

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is an important person?
2. What is meant by a few years?
3. How do people become important?

Personalize:
1. Who do you know that's an important person?
2. What makes that person important to you?
3. When do you feel you are an important person?
4. What could you do to become an important person?
5. How would you feel if you were with an important person?

Challenge:
1. What characteristics make an important person?
2. Who decides who is an important person?
3. Why can't all people agree on the most important person?
4. Is there any category that included a large number of important persons?
5. When does a person become important?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Eleanor Close
Mary Lowell

# IS MONEY THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL?

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is money?
2. What is evil?
3. What does root of all evil mean?
4. What does it mean when people say "they've got money"?
5. Why do we need money?

**Personalize:**

1. Do you wish you had more money than you do?
2. How do you earn money?
3. Is there something you want that money can't buy?
4. Have you had money problems in your family?
5. Do you think money brings happiness?

**Challenge:**

1. Why do some people have more money than others?
2. How can money problems be solved?
3. How can wealth be shared?
4. What are problems that wealthy people have that average people might not have?
5. What would the world be like if all the people had the same amount of money?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Mary [illegible]

GERMS

Suggested Questions

Define:

1. What resources could we use to best define germ?
2. Where would you find germs?
3. How can germs be harmful?
   Did you ever hear of germ war-fare?
4. How can germs be helpful? (Are helpful "bacteria" called germs!?)
5. What are some names given to germs?

Personalize:

1. Has a particular germ attacked you?
2. How did you fight this germ?
3. Has anyone else in your family (or friends) had problems with a germ?
4. How did they combat it?
5. What have you done to avoid harmful germs?

Challenge:

1. What does fighting germs meant to/for the drug-selling industry?
2. How can germs affect your future/others?
3. How do germs challenge the medical/research field?
4. How do germs affect/challenge developing nations? Over-populated areas?
5. Do germs effect the economy of your family? School? Nation?
6. What are professions in "germ" fields? Would you like such a career?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Mary Norton

ANTIQUE(S)

Suggested Questions

Define:

1. Where would you look to find information about antiques?
2. How old is antique?
3. What do you think of when you think of antique?
4. How important is an antique?
5. What are some antiques? Types?
6. What would you do to find information about antiques?

Personalize:

1. Did you ever hear of a person being called antique? Antiquated?
2. What antiques do you have?
3. What antiques have you seen? Where?
4. Are they important to heritage within your family?
5. What are some that may be important to your parents? Grandparents? Town? State? Country?
6. If you had a valuable antique, what would you do with it?

Challenge:

1. Some people own antique shops--how do they make a living? Where do they get antiques? What other jobs are there that relate to antiques?
2. If you had an antique rocker, how would you preserve it?
3. Suppose our class decided to set up an antique display in our classroom--how would we do it? What would it include?
4. What do publications include about antiques? Coin magazines, car, tin-ware, glass, etc.?
5. Where can you go to see antiques in your town? State? United States? Europe?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Mary Norton

# INTERRUPTING

Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is interrupting?
2. Describe different types of interruption.
3. What are different ways to interrupt?
4. Can interruption be good?
5. When is it not good?

**Personalize:**

1. Do you ever interrupt others? When?
2. Do people ever interrupt you? How do you feel?
3. What is a good experience you have had being interrupted? Or interrupt someone else?
4. What is a bad experience you have had being interrupted? Or interrupt someone else?

**Challenge:**

1. How can someone interrupt politely?
2. How can a situation be handled when misinformation is being handled without interrupting rudely?
3. Is there a formal way of interrupting?
4. Are there books about interrupting? Could you write one?
5. Movies? T.V. programs? Titles?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Mary Norton

# FIELD TRIPS

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a field trip?
2. What kind of field trips could we take from this classroom?
3. What would be the limitations of a real field trip?
4. Do field trips have to be real?
5. What are alternatives to a "real" trip?

**Personalize:**

1. If you could take any field trip you wished, what would you want to do? (Record the brainstorming).
2. Could your chosen field trip be real?
3. If it could not be real, how could your trip happen?
4. Where have you been of F.T.S.?
5. Were they of value to you?

**Challenge:**

1. How could you go about planning a real field trip?
2. How could you have a trip that was not real? How can you make plans for this for your class?
3. What resources could you use for your trip?
4. What materials could you use for your trip?
5. How much time will your trip take?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Mary Norton

TEETH

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What are different meanings for teeth?
2. Describe human teeth.
3. What are teeth made of?
4. What is a dentist?
5. What is the teeth product industry?

Personalize:
1. What is an experience you have had with your teeth that you would like to share?
2. Do you care for your teeth?
3. What are rules of your house for teeth care?
4. Do you have an animal that needs teeth care? Problems?
5. Would you like to be a dentist? Sell tooth products?

Challenge:
1. What is the future for your teeth?
2. Could you write a creative tooth story?
3. What are good rules for teeth care?
4. What is the economic value of teeth-care industry?
5. What are new products to be invented? Equipment?
6. Future of human's teeth?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Sharon Marten
Kathy Ross

# SHOES

**Warm-up Activity:**

1. Shoe leather--Finish this sentence: "I would walk a mile for_____."
2. Poem--"Shoes" by Tom Robinson

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**

1. What is a shoe?
2. What are the different types of shoes?
3. What are shoes made of?
4. What is the function (purpose) of a shoe?
5. How are shoes made?

**Personalize:**

1. Describe your favorite pair of shoes.
2. Where do you buy your shoes?
3. What troubles have shoes caused you?
4. Describe how shoes have helped you in your world of make-believe.
5. Why do you have more than one pair of shoes?

**Challenge:**

1. Describe the most unusual shoe you know about.
2. If your shoe could talk what would it say?
3. If you could make a new shoe, describe what it would be like.
4. If you could choose someone's shoes, whose would you choose and what would you do in them?
5. What would the world be like without shoes?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

SHOES

Shoes

By Tom Robinson

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Contributed by: Sharon Marten
Kathy Ross

# COLOR

**Warm-up Activity:**

1. Book--Hailstones and Halibut Bones by Mary O'Neill. This book has also been made into a movie.
2. Poem--"Colors" by Shel Silverstein

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**

1. What is color?
2. How do you get shades of a color?
3. What has color?
4. What are some colors?
5. What media do you use to show colors?
6. Where do you see colors?

**Personalize:**

1. What is your favorite color?
2. Why is that your favorite color?
3. When has the color of something helped you make a decision?
4. What color do you dislike and why?
5. What colors make you feel happy or good?
6. What colors make you feel sad or gloomy?
7. Why do cclors make you feel certain ways?

**Challenge:**

1. Who does or doesn't see colors (such as animals, color blind people)?
2. What effect do colors have on your feelings?
3. If you could change the color of one thing, what would it be and what color would you give it?
4. Describe how race and color are related.
5. Write your own poem about a color.

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

COLOR

Colors

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By shel Silverstein
taken from the book Where the Sidewalk Ends

Contributed by: Sharon Marten
Kathy Ross

# PETS

**Warm-up Activity:**

1. Have the students do a round robin completing, "The pet I would wish for is a _____." Have second student repeat the sentence plus repeating what the first student wished for. Continue around the circle until the last person makes his wish and repeats all the other students' wishes.
2. Use the poem, "Double-Tail Dog" by Shel Silverstein. Have students complete this sentence: The funniest pet is a _____." May also be done as a round robin.

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**

1. What is a pet?
2. What kinds of pets are there?
3. What do pets do?
4. What do pets eat?
5. Where are they kept?
6. Why do we have pets?

**Personalize:**

1. What is your favorite pet?
2. What pet would you wish for and why?
3. Tell of a fun experience with a pet.
4. Tell of a sad experience with a pet.
5. Why do you love your pet?
6. What wild animals have you had for pets?
7. At what times do you really need your pet?

**Challenge:**

1. How would you train your pet?
2. If you traded places with your pet, what would you say about your owner?
3. If you could be a pet, what pet would you choose?
4. What would the world be like without pets?
5. If you could invent the most perfect pet, what qualities would it have?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

PETS

Double-Tail Dog

*This poem was removed from this document prior to its being submitted to the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

By Shell Silverstein
taken from the book Where the Sidewalk Ends

Contributed by: Sharon Marten
Kathy Ross

# GUM

Warm-up Activity: Give each student a piece of gum. Put the gum in their mouth, feel it with their tongue, chew it slowly. Then have students give a descriptive word of what they felt, what they tasted, etc.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is gum?
2. What is gum made of?
3. What types of gum are there?
4. What do you do with gum?
5. How is gum made?

Personalize:
1. What kinds of gum do you like to chew?
2. Why do you like to chew gum? Or dislike?
3. What funny experience have you had with gum?
4. When do you chew gum?
5. Pantomime blowing a bubble with a piece of gum.

Challenge:
1. What kind of gum would you use to repair a pencil and why?
2. How can you get gum out of things?
3. What could you use gum for besides chewing?
4. What kind of "New Gum" would you like to invent?
5. What would it be like if you had to chew gum constantly?
6. What would the world be like without gum?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Pam Vensey

THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. If you were in outer space, what would you most like to see?
2. What exactly do we mean by the Solar System?
3. What things are part of it?
4. How are planets and stars different?
5. How are planets and moons different?
6. What are constellations?
7. What are asteroids, comets, meteors, etc.?

Personalize:
1. Pick any heavenly body (define) you would like to be but don't tell us.
2. Give us a clue about yourself--don't make it too easy.
3. We'll see if we can guess who you are.

Challenge:
1. We are astronomers, looking through a telescope. All of a sudden, we discover a 10th planet. What should we call it? What will it be like--temperature, land, water, atmosphere, moons, etc.?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Pam Tansey

GARBAGE

Suggested Questions

Define:

1. How many of you have to help around the house?
2. What kinds of jobs do you do?
3. Does anyone have to take out the garbage?
4. What exactly is garbage?
5. What things do we put in the garbage?
6. Where does it go?
7. Are junk and garbage the same thing?

Read poem page 70 in Where the Sidewalk Ends
"Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout."

Personalize:

1. Have you ever dropped the garbage and had to pick it all up?
2. What other experiences have you had with it?
3. Have you ever gone through somebody's garbage looking for something?
4. Can garbage cause us any problems?

Challenge: If all the garbage trucks in Waterloo decided to dump the garbage on our playground and we had to do something useful with it, what could we do with it?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Pam Tansey

HABITS & SMOKING

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a habit?
2. Name some habits people have.
3. What causes habits to form?
4. How can we stop them?
5. Are there good habits?
6. What habits can be dangerous?
7. Why do people continue if they can harm them?
8. Why do people smoke?

Personalize:
1. What good habits do you have?
2. What bad habits?
3. Have you ever tried to get rid of one?
4. Have you tried to develop some?
5. Do any of your parents smoke?
6. Have any of you ever tried it?
7. Do you think you will smoke when you grow up?
8. Why or why not?

Challenge:
1. If you had to convince others not to smoke, how would you do it?
2. Let's say Mr. Oaks asked us to convince the rest of the school not to smoke, how would you do it?

Below is a work space for additonal or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Pam Tansey

COMMERCIAL TELEVISION

Suggested Questions

Define:

1. All of you watch television at home, who can tell me what the term commercial television means?
2. Why do they have commercials?
3. Are there any programs or times when there are none? When?
4. The producers and actors are always worried about something called ratings, who can tell me something about those?
5. How do programs get ratings? Who rates them?
6. What happens when they have nigh ratings, low ratings?
7. Does it matter to the sponsors what a show's ratings are? Why?
8. Does it matter to you what the ratings are?
9. Are they necessary?
10. What are the different types of programs on T.V.(not names)
11. What shows (names) would fall into each category?

Personalize:

1. What kinds of shows do you like best? Why? (sports, quiz shows, mysteries, cartoons, comedies, variety shows, news, soaps, movies).
2. What kinds do you like best? Why?
3. Do you prefer a variety or all the same type?
4. Do your choices differ from your parents, brothers and sisters, friends?
5. Have your preferences changed any as you've grown older?
6. Do you think they'll continue to change? Why?
7. How much T.V. do you watch a day? A week?

Challenge:

1. Why do you think commercial T.V. has been called the "Idiot Box" or the "Vast Wasterland"?
2. Do you agree or disagree that the majority of the T.V. programs are a waste of time? Why? Be specific.
3. How would you improve the quality of commercial T.V.?
4. What things would you take into consideration in trying to improve the ratings?
5. How has television been a factor in advancing our society's technology, communication, education?
6. How could you improve upon the time you spend watching T.V.?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Pam Tansey

# HAUNTED HOUSE

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What special things happen in October?
2. What's special about Halloween?
3. What are some of the special things besides "trick o. treating" that go along with Halloweeen? (Haunted house)
4. How would you decide if a house is haunted?

Personalize:
1. Have you ever been to a haunted house? Tell me about it.
2. Was it real? How do you know?
3. Were you scared?
4. Would you like to go to one? Why?

Challenge:
1. Lets say we wanted to have a haunted house here at school, how would we go about creating one?
2. Are there any houses near here that would be good?
3. What things would we need?
4. What would we have to do?
5. Would it scare people? Would they enjoy it?
6. What special sounds would we need? How, where?
7. How much time would it take to make it?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Jan Morales

WISHES

Warm-up Activity: Read Story William Wish, L. 8, Ginn.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What do we mean by wishes?
2. Who can make wishes?
3. Do wishes come true?
4. What kinds of wishes are there?
5. How are wishes made?
6. Are wishes important? Why?

Personalize:
1. Have you ever made a wish? Did it come true?
2. What is your favorite wish?
3. Has a wish ever hurt you?
4. When do you make a wish?
5. Do you believe in wishes?

Challenge:
1. If a genie appeared and told you you could have three wishes, what would you wish for?
2. What would our world be like if our wishes all came true?
3. What does "Don't wish your life away" mean?
4. What could you do to make your favorite wish come true?
5. What could you do to help make a friend's wish come true?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Jan Morales

# LIES

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a lie?
2. What is the difference between a "white lie" and a lie?
3. Who can lie?
4. Who can be lied to?
5. What prevents lies?
6. What causes someone to lie?
7. Is lying a good or bad thing? Why?

Personalize:
1. What ways have you tried not to lie?
2. What ways have you lied?
3. In what ways does lying help you?
4. In what ways does lying not help you?
5. Does lying help you to be a better person? Why or why not?

Challenge:
1. How can you keep yourself from lying?
2. How can you help someone else keep from lying?
3. What would our world be like if everyone lied?
4. Create a plan to help yourself keep from lying.
5. If you could think of the biggest whopper of a lie, what would your lie be?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Sherry Marston
Lola Bisbey

# DREAMS

Warm-up Activity: Use poem Invitation from Where the Sidewalk Ends.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a dream?
2. When do people have dreams?
3. Where do people have dreams?
4. What causes people to dream?
5. Does everyone dream?
6. What types of dreams are there?

Personalize:
1. Do you dream?
2. Where is your usual (favorite) place and time to dream?
3. What was your worst dream? Your best?
4. After you dream, what do you tell others about them?
5. How are your dreams alike or different?

Challenge:
1. How can you control your dreams?
2. How is daydreaming beneficial or harmful?
3. What causes people to awaken from a nightmare or pleasant dream?
4. What things do people do when they are dreaming?
5. If you could have a dream last forever what would it be?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Lola Bisbey
Sherry Marston

# LUNCHROOM

Warm-up Activity: Have class meeting after lunch or during nutrition unit.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a lunchroom?
2. Where is the lunchroom?
3. When is the lunchroom used?
4. Why do we need a lunchroom?
5. What other things is your lunchroom used for?

Personalize:
1. How often do you eat in the lunchroom?
2. In what ways do you take care of the lunchroom?
3. What things do you do in the lunchroom other than eat?
4. How could you make the lunchroom a more enjoyable place?
5. If you had a choice, in what other place would you rather eat and why?

Challenge:
1. What changes could be made in the lunchroom?
2. What are some important lunchroom rules?
3. How should the lunchroom rules be enforced?
4. If you could design a lunchroom what would it be like?
5. What makes it a good day or a bad day in the lunchroom?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Evelyn Aubrey
Nathan Frazee

# STORMS

Warm-up Activity: Tape--"We interrupt this program....."

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a storm?
2. What kinds of storms are there?
3. What causes storms?
4. Do different parts of the country have different kinds of storms?

Personalize:
1. Have you ever been afraid of storms? When?
2. Where would you like to be during a storm?
3. What can you do to prepare for a storm?
4. How do you find out about storms?
5. How do you know storms are approaching?
6. How do you feel when you hear the tornado drill?

Challenge:
1. If you were the oldest person home when there was a storm, how would you prepare?
2. What words would you use to describe how you feel if a tornado hit our school?
3. What would you do if you were on the playground and you saw a tornado ready to hit?
4. Does bad weather effect the way you feel or behave?
5. What would it be like if we didn't have storms? Is there a reason for storms? Are there some good things that result from storms?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Evelyn Aubrey
Nathan Frazee

# BLINDNESS

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is blindness?
2. Are there different kinds of blindness?
3. What does it mean to be "blind as a bat"?
4. What is color blindness?
5. What is night blindness?
6. What is braille?

**Personalize:**

1. Do you know anyone who is blind?
2. What do you do when you see a blind person?
3. Have you ever thought about how you would feel if you lost your sight?
4. Is blindness the most serious handicap a person could have?
5. Have you ever "not been able to see"?

**Challenge:**

1. How does a blind person "see"?
2. How would your life change if you were blind?
3. How would you be able to help a blind person?
4. If a friend of yours became blind, what could you do to help him live with his blindness?
5. Why is vision so important?
6. What other senses do blind people rely on?
7. Could a blind person lead a normal life?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Evelyn Aubrey
Nathan Frazee

# LUCK

Warm-up Activity: Bring or wear something lucky.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is luck?
2. What does luck of the Irish mean?
3. What symbols or objects are lucky? (Lucky number)
4. Where are lucky symbols found?
5. If somebody says good luck to you - what does it mean?

Personalize:
1. When have you ever been lucky?
2. When have you been unlucky?
3. What lucky objects do you have?
4. What lucky days do you have?
5. How do you know when you are lucky?

Challenge:
1. How does it make you feel when other people have good luck?
2. How does it make you feel when other people have bad luck?
3. What can you do to avoid bad luck?
4. Why are some people luckier than others?
5. What can you do to create good luck?
6. If you could have good luck, what would it be?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Evelyn Aubrey
Nathan Frazee

TALENTED

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What does the word talented mean?
2. What is another name for talented?

Personalize:
1. Do you have any talents?
2. Do you know anyone with talent?
3. Would you like to have a special talent?
4. How can your talent help or harm other people?
5. How can your talent help you?
6. Should you make use of your talents?

Challenge:
1. How many different talents are there?
2. How are talents developed?
3. Are some talents better than others?
4. Are talents important?
5. Does everyone have a talent?
6. Should people with talent be treated differently?

Below is a work space for addtional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Evelyn Aubrey
Nathan Frazee

# GRANDPARENTS

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a grandparent?
2. What is a great-grandparent?
3. Can friends be grandparents? Why or why not?
4. What is old?
5. What are other names for grandparents? (Granny, grandad, etc.)

**Personalize:**

1. How often do you see your grandparents?
2. If you could go somewhere with a grandparent, where would it be?
3. If you could do something with a grandparent, what would you do?
4. If your grandparent died, how would you remember them?

**Challenge:**

1. When grandparents feel lonely, how can you help them get over their loneliness?
2. How will you remember your grandparents?
3. How do grandparents show they care about grandchildren?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Evelyn Aubrey
Nathan Frazee

# MUD

Warm-up Activity: Song--"Mud Mud Mud."

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is mud?
2. How does mud feel?
3. What causes mud?
4. What can mud be used for?
5. What are some different kinds of mud?

Personalize:
1. What does it feel like to walk barefoot in mud?
2. Have you ever played in the mud?
3. Has mud ever caused you to get in trouble?
4. What kinds of things have you made from mud?

Challenge:
1. If you could play in the mud, what games might you play?
2. Name words that describe how mud feels.
3. Has mud ever caused you to get in a sticky situations? How?
4. Do all people feel the same way about mud?
5. How would you feel about mud if you had to live with it all the time?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

# CLASS DISCUSSION

## TOPICS

### SUGGESTED LEVEL

K - 12

Contributed by: David Bishop
Martha Beenken

# HANDICAPS

Suggested Questions

Define:

1. What are handicaps? List some.
2. How many handicapped persons do you know?
3. Are handicapped people inferior to "normal" people? If so, how?
4. Do you know any handicapped people who are brilliant? That you admire?

Personalize:

1. When was the last time you saw a handicapped person?
2. How do you feel when you see a handicapped person?
3. How do you act when you are with a handicapped person? (blind, deaf, crippled, deformed, mentally retarded, spastic).
4. What is their reaction to your actions?
5. What kinds of things have handicapped people done to make you feel at ease with them?

Challenge:

1. How do you suppose a handicapped person feels when he is with "normal" people?
2. Blindfold one person for twenty minutes of normal activity. How did he feel and what problems did he encounter?
3. How would your life be different if you had a handicapped person in your family?
4. How is society recognizing and providing for handicapped people?
5. What kinds of changes would our school building have to make to accommodate handicapped people easily?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Lynn M. Blair-Broeker
Judy Rust

# ENERGY

Warm-up Activity: Have your group list all of the electrical appliances that they might find in a house.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is energy?
2. What are the sources of energy available in the world today?
3. Where do these sources come from?
4. What are these energy sources dependent upon? ($, politics, geography, etc.)
5. What energy must you have to survive?
6. What does it mean to waste? List some examples of wasting energy.
7. What does "conserve" mean?
8. What research is now on-going in energy resources?

Personalize:
1. What types of energy (and how much) do you and your family use in a day?
2. What things do you need energy for in your daily life?
3. What things do you use energy for in your daily life?
4. What are ways in which you (and your family) waste energy? In what ways do you conserve energy?
5. Name ways in which you have consciously tried to conserve energy.

Challenge:
1. What things could you and your family do to conserve energy in your daily lives?
2. What other sources of energy (besides those you use now) could you use? How would this be possible? What changes would have to be made?
3. What advantages are there in conserving energy? What are the disadvantages?
4. How might the government control our use of energy? How soon do you think this will happen?
5. What disadvantages might there be in having the government set controls?
6. What types of responsibility do each of us as individuals (and as families and communities) have to conserve energy?
7. Who is responsible for developing new sources of energy?
8. How far into the future does this generation have a moral responsibility concerning energy and its conservation?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Mary Norton

# FOOD CHAIN

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a chain?
2. How do you explain the saying, "the chain is only as strong as its weakest link"?
3. What happens if a link breaks?
4. Have you ever heard of a food chain? Ecology? How would you describe consumer? Altimate?
5. In a food chain, who is the altimate consumer?

Personalize:
1. What part do you play in the food chain?
2. What would you find around your home that is part of a food chain?
3. What personal examples could you give of the food chain in your aquarium?
4. What living things have you seen in a pond?
5. How does the air you breath relate to the food chain?

Challenge:
1. What role do insects play in the food chain?
2. Suppose just the bees disappeared, what would happen to the food chain?
3. What about all the insects--what would happen if they disappeared?
4. How would it affect the ultimate consumer?
5. What link in the food chain exploits (define) the food chain the most?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Pam Tansey

# RESOLUTIONS

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. After Christmas, we celebrate another holiday that's usually a lot of fun. What is it?
2. Why do you think we celebrate New Years?
3. What is so important about it?
4. How do you celebrate?
5. Some people make resolutions - do you know what they are?
6. Why do you suppose they do this? How long?
7. Could we make them at other times - like when?
8. Is it like a promise? To whom do we make the promise?

**Personalize:**

1. Have you ever made a New Year's resolution or any other kind?
2. What did you resolve to do?
3. Did you keep it?
4. Was it hard to keep?
5. What should you do if you break one?

**Challenge:**

1. What resolution could you make for next year and how could you make sure you keep it?
2. What resolutions could you make for school?
3. Which ones are easier to keep?
4. What could we do if we forget?
5. How many should you make?
6. Can you ever make too many?
7. Should everyone make the same ones? Why?
8. Can anyone else make them for you?
9. Should you tell others your resolutions?
10. Is it a good idea to write them down?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contribute by: Eleanor Close
Mary Lowell

# SHOULD WE HAVE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT?

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is punishment?
2. What is meant by capital?
3. What is capital punishment?
4. Who decides whether we have capital punishment?
5. What are some types of capital punishment?

**Personalize:**

1. Do you believe in capital punishment?
2. What crimes should have capital punishment?
3. Do you think capital punishment would be a deterrent to crime?
4. Do you know of any place where there is capital punishment?
5. Do you know how other cultures feel about capital punishment?

**Challenge:**

1. How would you feel if a person was found innocent of a crime after capital punishment has already been carried out?
2. Why do you think capital punishment has been abolished?
3. What are some alternatives to capital punishment?
4. Do you think a convicted murderer would repeat that crime if he/she were released?
5. Under what conditions should capital punishment be administered?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Eleanor Close
Mary Lowell

# OPINIONS

**Warm-up Activity:** To start you could tell the group that the principal decided there would be no more recess the rest of the year.

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**
1. How are opinions formed?
2. What is an opinion?
3. How are opinions expressed?

**Personalize:**
1. What do you base your opinion on?
2. What do you have opinions about?
3. Can you change your opinion?
4. How do you get people to change their opinion?
5. How do you react when someone disagrees with your opinion?

**Challenge:**
1. Can an opinion be stupid or dumb?
2. Why is it important to listen to people's opinions?
3. Whose opinions affect you?
4. Is it important for people to have opinions?
5. What are some ways we let our opinions be known?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Sherry Marston
Lola Bisbey

# POLLUTION

Use during ecology unit or in Spring during clean-up week.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is pollution?
2. What causes pollution?
3. In what places or areas are pollution found?
4. What are some examples of pollutants?

Personalize:
1. What kinds of pollution have you seen?
2. Where have you seen examples of pollution?
3. How do you feel when you see people polluting? Why?
4. How have you contributed to pollution?
5. Why do you think people pollute?

Challenge:
1. How can we stop pollution?
2. Is there a place in the world where there is no pollution?
3. What effect does pollution have on your like? Wildlife?
4. What would the world be like if there were no pollution?
5. What would happen if we stopped trying to control pollution?
6. What effect does pollution have on our economy?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Sherry Marston
Lola Bisbey

# FEAR

Warm-up Activity: Halloween, have room dark as students return, dress like a witch, poem Afraid of the Dark from Where the Sidewalk Ends.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is fear?
2. What types of fear are there?
3. When do people fear?
4. What things are feared?
5. How is fear shown?

Personalize:
1. What do you fear most, least?
2. When are you afraid?
3. Do you have any imaginary fears?
4. How do you feel when you are afraid?
5. What comforts you when you are afraid?
6. What fears have you outgrown?

Challenge:
1. Can fear strengthen you?
2. How can you make your fears worse or better?
3. If you could eliminate one fear from the world what would it be?
4. How are fears different in different parts of the world?
5. How could you eliminate a fear of your own?
6. How could you help a friend get rid of a fear?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Sherry Marston
Lola Bisbey

# TEACHERS

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a teacher?
2. Where can a teacher be found?
3. Who can be a teacher?
4. What does a teacher do?
5. How does someone become a teacher?
6. Why would someone want to be a teacher?
   (may want to use as a challenge question).

**Personalize:**

1. Who have your teachers been?
2. Are all of your teachers here at school? Then, where?
3. What do you like and dislike about teachers?
4. Could you ever be a teacher to someone? When? How?
5. Why do you need teachers?

**Challenge:**

1. If you could describe a good teacher what would she/he be like? (Encourage not to describe physical features).
2. What does a teacher need to learn to become a teacher?
3. What rules should a teacher have in his/her classroom?
4. What would be the hardest thing to teach and why? The easiest?
5. If you were alone in the world how would you learn things?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Lola Bisbey
Sherry Marston

# PUNISHMENT

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is punishment?
2. What are some forms of punishment?
3. Why are people punished?
4. Where do acts of punishment take place?

Personalize:
1. What have you been punished for?
2. What was your punishment?
3. In what ways have you punished someone or something?
4. Do you feel that you have been punished unfairly? How?
5. How have you reacted to unfair punishment and fair punishment?

Challenge:
1. What does punishment accomplish?
2. How should one decide upon an appropriate punishment?
3. What would you do if you feel you have been punished unfairly?
4. Do you feel that any situation merits corporal punishment?
5. Give an example of a crime in our society. What punishment would you administer to a person who has committed that crime?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Jan Morales

# HONESTY

Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is honesty?
2. Who is honest?
3. What different ways are there to being honest?
4. Who can you be honest to?
5. What prevents honesty?
6. What helps honesty?
7. Is honesty a good or bad value? Why?

**Personalize:**

1. What ways have you been honest?
2. What ways have you not been honest?
3. Have you ever helped someone else to be honest?
4. Have you ever prevented someone from being honest?
5. Does being honest help you to be a better person? What ways?

**Challenge:**

1. How can you learn to practice more honesty?
2. Is honesty necessary for life?
3. How can you help yourself to be more honest?
4. How can you help someone else to be more honest?
5. What does "Honesty is the best policy" mean?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Sharon Marten
Kathy Ross

# FEARS

Warm-up Activity:

1. Poem - "Afraid of the Dark" by Shel Silverstein
2. Poem - "The Worst" by Shel Silverstein
3. Book - The Don't Be Scared Book by Ilse Margret Vogel
4. Book - What is Fear? By Jean Rosenbaum, M. D. and Lutie McAuliffe.

## Suggested Questions

Define:

1. What is a fear?
2. What types of fear are there?
3. When do people fear?
4. Where does fear occur?
5. What causes a fear?
6. How do you think fears affect others?
7. How do fears start?

Personalize:

1. What is your greatest fear?
2. What fear have you overcome?
3. What causes your fears?
4. Where do most of your fears occur?
5. What fears have you outgrown?
6. What fears do you think you will never outgrow?
7. What personal fears are good or valuable to you?
8. If you could eliminate a fear, which one would you choose? Why?
9. Has someone helped you overcome a fear?
10. What scared you the most?

Challenge:

1. How do you think a fear could be overcome?
2. How could you help a friend overcome a fear?
3. What if the people had no fears?
4. How could fears rule people?
5. What happens in our world to cause new fears?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

FEARS

Poem: "Afraid of the Dark"

By Shel Silverstein
taken from the book Where the Sidewalk Ends

Poem: "The Worst"

By Shel Siverstein
taken from the book Where the Sidewalk Ends

*These poems were removed from this document prior to its being submitted to the ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

Contributed by: Sharon Marten
Kathy Ross

# TIME LINE

Warm-up Activity:

1. Number the students off--1, 2, 3, etc. Then ask the students to think of events which took place at the age of their number. For instance, number 1 would think of something he could do at age one. If student has not reached age of number, have them think of something they would like to do at that age.
2. Strength Bombardment--0-5-- What you did that was important.

Suggested Questions

Define:

1. What is a Time Line?
2. Where are Time Lines used?
3. What's the value of a Time Line?
4. When do you use a Time Line?
5. What is a "Life Time Line"?

Personalize:

1. Where have you seen a Time Line?
2. If you made a Time Line, what important events would you put on it?
3. What successes and failures would you put on your Life Time Line?
4. Why would your Time Line differ from others?
5. What sources would help you develop your Life Time Line?
6. Who do you think would have identical Time Lines?

Challenge:

1. What do you think is at the end of your Time Line?
2. Make a Time Line of your life using pictures of drawings to illustrate the important happenings in your life.
3. What if your Time Line never ended?
4. If you could trade your Life Time Line who would you trade with and why?
5. If everyone's Time Lines were identical what would the world be like?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Pam Tansey

# DREAMS

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. How many of you have dreams?
2. When do we dream? Other times?
3. What are dreams?
4. Do you dream in black and white or in color?
5. Do you remember your dreams when you wake up?
6. Do you dream every night?
7. What do you think causes them?
8. Do we have any control over what we dream?
9. Do you have to be asleep to dream?

**Personalize:**

1. Would anyone like to share their dreams with us?
2. Does anyone ever have the same dream twice?
3. How do you feel when you wake up?
4. Do you like to dream?
5. What do you have most often, good dreams or bad?
6. What do you think causes bad dreams?
7. Good ones?
8. When do you dream the most?
9. Have your dreams ever come true?
10. Have you ever had a dream that you thought was true when you woke up?
11. Can you sometimes do things in your dreams that you can't do in real life?

**Challenging:**

1. If you could chose one dream to have <u>every</u> night, what would it be?
2. What dreams would you like to have come true?
3. How has the world been helped by people's dreams?
4. What changes might there be if we couldn't dream?
5. What dream might you give to others?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Lola Bisbey
Sherry Marston

# FEAR

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is fear?
2. What types of fear are there?
3. When do people fear?
4. What things are feared?
5. How is fear shown?

**Personalize:**

1. What do you fear most, least?
2. When are you afraid?
3. Do you have any imaginary fears?
4. How do you feel when you are afraid?
5. What comforts you when you are afraid?
6. What fears have you outgrown?

**Challenge:**

1. Can fear strengthen you?
2. How can you make your fears worse or better?
3. If you could eliminate one fear from the world what would it be?
4. How are fears different in different parts of the world?
5. How could you eliminate fear of your own?
6. How could you help a friend get rid of a fear?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Pam Tansey
Jan Morales

# FAILURE

Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is failure?
2. Who can fail?
3. What can fail besides people
4. What are the signs of failure?
5. What causes failure?
6. What prevents failure?

**Personalize:**

1. Have you ever failed at something you tried to do?
2. Has someone ever failed you?
3. Have you ever caused someone to fail?
4. When you failed, did you give-up or try again?
5. Did failing help you to learn?

**Challenge:**

1. How can we learn from failure?
2. Is failure necessary for life?
3. How can you help someone who has failed or is failing?
4. What would this world be like if no one ever failed?
5. Can you invent a method or steps people could take to prevent failure?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Pam Tansey
Jan Morales

# SUCCESS

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What does success mean?
2. What are the signs of success?
3. What kinds of success are there?
4. What causes success?
5. What prevents success?
6. Who can succeed?
7. What can succeed besides people?
8. What are the rewards of success?

**Personalize:**

1. Have you ever succeeded with something you tried to do?
2. How did you know that you succeeded?
3. Have you ever helped someone to succeed?
4. Did your success help you?
5. Did success ever hurt you?
6. Did your success help you to learn anything?

**Challenge:**

1. What does the saying "Nothing succeeds like success" mean?
2. How can you help yourself to be more successful?
3. Pick one thing you want to succeed in and tell us how you would try to succeed.
4. Can you be successful if nobody knows about it but you?
5. What would the world be like if everyone succeeded all the time?
6. Create a plan for a person to become more successful.

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Mary Norton

# CRISIS

Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a meaning for crisis?
2. Are there different meanings for crisis?
3. What are different kinds of crisis?
4. What is an energy crisis?

**Personalize:**

1. Have you ever had a crisis in your life?
2. Has your family ever had a crisis? A friend?
3. How does your family handle the energy crisis?
4. How do you feel about the energy crisis?

**Challenge:**

1. What can you do to help the energy crisis?
2. What can your family do to help the energy crisis?
3. Your town?
4. Your nation?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Mary Norton

# CONTRACTS

Suggested Questions

**Define:**
1. What does "contract" mean?
2. How many different kinds of contracts can you think of?
3. What might the terms of a contract be?
4. Can contracts be written? Spoken?

**Personalize:**
1. Have you ever had a contract with anyone?
2. Do you know of contracts your parents (or friends) have had?
3. Would you like to try a contract?
4. Do you feel contracts are good?

**Challenge:**
1. What is the value of contracts?
2. How can they be good? Bad?
3. How do contracts effect economy? Law?
4. How could we use contracts in this classroom? School?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Keith Hall

# CHEATING

**Warm-up Activity:** Can you give a personal situation when someone you trusted cheated you?

**Objectives:**

1. To become aware of individual responsibility to prevent cheating.
2. To become aware of how cheating can affect our lives.
   To become aware of the social costs of cheating.

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**

1. What is cheating?
2. What kinds of cheating take place?
3. What kinds of people cheat? A certain age group?
4. Are there good reasons for cheating?
5. What is the difference between borrowing others' work, copying and cheating?

**Personalize:**

1. Do you know people who cheat?
2. What types of cheating do you think could be acceptable?
3. Under what circumstances would you allow people to cheat?
4. How do you personally feel about a person who cheats?
5. In what ways have you felt you have been cheated?
6. How do you feel after you have cheated (if you have cheated)?
7. What kinds of penalties do you recommend for cheaters?

**Challenge:**

1. What can people do to cut down on cheating?
2. What can teachers do to cut down on cheating?
3. What if someone helped a close friend who was not prepared for a test by allowing him/her to copy?
4. What would the world be like if everybody cheats?
5. How would you feel toward a person you thought was a cheater?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: David Bishop
Martha Beenken

# FRIENDSHIP

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is friendship?
2. What are some characteristics of your friends that make them friends?
3. How do you know a person is a friend or an acquaintance?
4. What do you expect out of a friend?
5. What are your obligations to a friend?
6. When does a friend cease to be a friend?
7. Why would he cease to be a friend?
8. How many friends does a person have to have to be popular?
9. What are fair weather friends?
10. What are some of the degrees of friendship?
11. How would you describe each degree of friendship?

**Personalize:**

1. What would it be like if you didn't have friends?
2. Why is it necessary for you to have friends?
3. Do you consider yourself a good friend to other people?
4. How do you know whether a friendship is strong or weak?
5. How do you go about making a friend out of an acquaintance?
6. Do you make friends easily?
7. Why do some people make friends more easily than others?
8. What have you done to cause a friend to cease to be a friend?
9. Whose fault is it when friends part?
10. How do you feel when you see a person who apparently doesn't have any friends?
11. When someone new moves into the school, do you try to make him/her a friend?
12. Can adults be your friends?
13. Can little kids be your friends?
14. What kinds of people should not be your friends?
15. Do you have any friends that you are embarrassed about?

**Challenge:**

1. What would you do if you found your friend talking about you behind your back?
2. What do you do if your friend causes trouble in the classroom?
3. What positive influence are you on your friends?
4. What negative influence are you on your friends?
5. What positive influence are your friends on you?
6. What negative influence are your friends on you?
7. How are you a better person for having friends?
8. If you don't make friends easily, how can you make yourself be a friendly person?
9. Can a person ever have too many friends?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Keith Hall

# PARENTING

**Warm-up Activity:** What is the most important characteristic or quality of a good parent?

**Objectives:**

1. To become aware of the problems in being a parent.
2. To become aware of the qualities of a good parent.
3. To become aware of the differences in parenting.

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**

1. What is a parent?
2. Discuss some of the characteristics of a good parent.
3. What are the effects of bad parenting?
4. What kinds of people can be parents? Must they be relatives? Non-relatives?
5. What can be done to improve parenting?
6. Who is responsible for improving the education of parents?

**Personalize:**

1. What changes would you make as a parent? Rules? Policies? Punishments?
2. As a parent, how would you improve communication?
3. How would you react to your child if he/she got into trouble?
4. What kinds of punishment would you prescribe for your children?
5. What if your physical punishment did not work effectively?
6. What do you feel when your parents don't listen to you?

**Challenge:**

1. What can be done to help parents do a more effective job?
2. What can be done to create more uniformity between families? Is uniformity always good?
3. What can be done to improve communication between parents and their children?
4. What is society's role in improving parents?
5. What can you do to help your parents do a better job of parenting?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group.

Contributed by: Keith Hall

# CLEAN ENVIRONMENT AND LITTERING

**Warm-up Activity:** Where is the most beautiful place you have been in your lifetime?

**Objectives:**

1. To become aware of the serious problem in our environment as littering becomes more common.
2. To become more aware of our role in maintaining a clean environment.
3. To promote a more socially responsible attitude toward the prevention of littering.

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**

1. What is a good environment?
2. What is littering? What types of littering do we have?
3. Where does the most littering take place?
4. What kind of people litter?
5. Do people have some good reasons for littering?

**Personalize:**

1. What can you do to stop littering?
2. What things do you think can be done to stop littering?
3. What penalties would you propose to control littering?
4. What would you do if you saw someone littering?
5. How do you feel about people who litter?
6. What area of our environment do you feel gets the most littering?
7. What would you do to make our environment a better place to live?

**Challenge:**

1. What laws should be passed to maintain a clean environment?
2. What can the public do to improve their environment and prevent littering?
3. What can be done to make it less convenient to litter?
4. What will be the result to our environment if littering continues?
5. What kinds of penalties will prevent littering?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Keith Hall

# PERSONALITY

**Warm-up Activity:** Which of the following personality traits do you feel is the most important? Choose one. a. Being enthusiastic, b. being considerate, c. being friendly, d. being sincere.

**Objectives:**

1. To become more aware of your own personality traits.
2. To become more aware of how personality affects your relations with other people.
3. To become more aware of good and bad personality traits.
4. To become aware that people can change their personality traits by selecting more appropriate traits.

Suggested Personality Traits:

| Good | Bad |
|---|---|
| 1. courteous | 1. inconsistent |
| 2. positive | 2. cruel |
| 3. enthusiastic | 3. sarcastic |
| 4. initiative and drive | 4. weak |
| 5. honest | 5. pessimistic |
| 6. neat | 6. cold |
| 7. open-minded | 7. rude |
| 8. sense-of-humor | 8. sour |
| 9. tactful | 9. irritable |
| 10. courageous | 10. careless |
| 11. considerate | 11. selfish |
| 12. friendly | 12. lazy |
| 13. dependable | 13. negative |
| 14. sincere | 14. domineering |
| 15. warm | 15. not dependable |
| 16. relaxed | 16. sloppy |
| 17. outgoing | 17. critical |
| 18. punctual | |

Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is meant by the word "personality"?
2. What is an extrovert or outgoing person?
3. What is an introvert or quiet, reserved person?
4. What kinds of charateristics can be listed about a bad personality?
5. What kinds of situations are there where the same person exhibits different personality traits?

**Personalize:**

1. What personality traits do you feel are important to having a pleasing personality?
2. Why do you feel a pleasing personality is important to you? What are some good outcomes for you?
3. How does a pleasing personality help others or benefit others who associate with you?
4. How do you feel about people who are rude, inconsistent, sulky, careless, moody or hold a grudge?
5. What are the consequences to yourself and others when you exhibit bad personality traits?
6. How would you react to negative statements, accusations, and attacks on your character?

Challenge:

1. What can people do to help themselves improve their personality traits?
2. What can people do to help others become more aware of the effect of their personality traits and improve themselves?
3. What things can be done to help people have a more positive attitude about themselves?
4. What can we do to prevent preformed opinions of a person before we actually know the real personality of the individual?
5. What would be people's reactions to discourtesies, accusations and inaccurate statements about them, when they may not deserve them?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

# CLASS DISCUSSION

## TOPICS

SUGGESTED LEVEL

7 - 12

Contributed by: David Bishop
Martha Beenken

# MARRIAGE

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is marriage?
2. Does standing in front of a preacher make a person married?
3. What is a common-law marriage?
4. How is a marriage different from a common-law arrangement?
5. What are the obligations of a marriage?
6. Why is marriage desirable?
7. How does a person know if he is ready for marriage?
8. Does falling in love mean you are ready for marriage?
9. Is love essential in a marriage?
10. In what kinds of cultures do people not need to fall in love before getting married?
11. Is marriage found in every culture?
12. What is there in common in marriages, regardless of culture and practice?

**Personalize:**

1. Why would you want to get married?
2. What kind of person would you look for to marry?
3. Why would you pick a person with those characteristics?
4. How would you rate your parents' marriage?
5. What skills do you need to develop in order to have a successful marriage?
6. How does getting married limit your freedom?
7. What give and take do you see between your mother and dad?

**Challenge:**

1. Describe an ideal marriage.
2. What do you intend to do differently when you get married?
3. What things can make your marriage work or fail?
4. How important is it to make a marriage work?
5. How important is it if a marriage fails?
6. How important is marriage to you?
7. Why do people get married?
8. What legal tangles are involved when a couple gets divorced?
9. How do kids suffer in a divorce?
10. Would you outlaw divorce?
11. Why would you make divorce more difficult to get?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Lynn M. Blair-Broeker
Judy Rust

# PARENTING

Warm-up Activity: Ask everyone to name one nice thing their mom or dad did today (or within the past week).

Suggested Questions

Define:

1. What makes a person a parent?
2. What does a parent do?
3. What makes a GOOD parent? What makes a BAD parent?
4. How can a single person be a parent?
5. How can babysitting be parenting?
6. How is a teacher (minister/priest/friend/brother/sister/aunt/uncle) a parent?
7. How might parenting be "unplanned"?
8. How might adults need parenting?

Personalize:

1. What do you feel your parents' responsibilities are to you?
2. What do YOUR PARENTS see as their responsibilities to you?
3. What things do your parents make you do that you might not like-but you know are good for you?
4. What things must you do for or with your parents just because you are a son or daughter--that you LIKE to do?
5. How can you have more than 2 parents?
6. Name qualities that your parents have that you LIKE (and don't like).
7. How would you feel if at 13 you found out you were adopted? Why would you want to find out who your biological parents are? Why would you want to see them or not see them?
8. Give reasons for thingking about parenting before you find yourself a parent.
9. How do your parents do too much for you? Too little?
10. At what age do you feel your parents are no longer responsible for you? Explain.
11. How do your parents live their life through you?
12. If they weren't your parents, would they be close friends? Explain.
13. What do you have in common with your parents?
14. Do your parents treat all their children equally? Why should they? Why shouldn't they?
15. When have you been a parent?
16. How might your family be better off with more children? With fewer children?
17. When might parents NOT BE REQUIRED to provide food, shelter, or clothing?

Challenge:

1. Why might you choose to NOT be a parent, to BE a parent?
2. How would you feel if you found out you can't have children?
3. If you are unable to have children but want to be a parent, what alternatives do you have?
4. How might you feel toward your husband or wife if they couldn't have children--and you want to have children?
5. What does it cost to give birth?
6. What does it cost, emotionally, to be responsible for another person?
7. What does it cost to raise the average child to eighteen?
8. How would you feel if you had a child with a birth defect? Brain damage? Would you care for him/her or put him/her into an institution?
9. How might you feel if your child dies?
10. What job benefits do your parents have that help to care for you?
11. What <u>one</u> thing do you as a parent want most to give to your child?
12. As a parent, what would you do differently from your parents?
13. How would you prefer to teach your children about sex?
    a. Teach them yourself
    b. Learn in the classroom
    c. Learn from friends, TV, etc.
14. When should parents be able to take their children to work with them?
15. When married, why might you prefer that the father stay home and the mother work?
16. If you could, how would you schedule your work so as to have time with your family?
17. What is the ideal thing for your family to do together?
18. What would be the hardest job to have and still have a family? explain.
19. How might YOU make plans to become a parent?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Lynn M. Blair-Broeker
Judy Rust

# STRESS

Warm-up Activity: What do you do to relax?

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is stress?
2. What causes stress?
3. Do all people "suffer" from stress?
4. What type of society (culture) might be more stressful to live in? What type less stressful?
5. What are the results of living under much stress? Physical? Mental?
6. What are the results of living under a less stressful society? Physical? Mental?

Personalize:
1. What are situations in your life that cause much stress?
2. How do you react to stress?
3. What do you do to get rid of stress and/or the mental and physical results of stress?
4. a. What situations in your family cause stress? How do the different members of your family react to a particularly stressful situation?
   b. What school situations cause stress? Do all students react in the same way to a stressful situation?
   c. What types of situations among your peers cause stress? How do your different friends react to the same stressful situation?
5. What have you done to help a friend, family member, etc. when they were under stress?
6. What have others done for you when you were under stress?

Challenge:
1. a. If you were to completely rebuild our society what would you do to get rid of stress?
   b. How would you make our society more stressful than it is now? Why would you do this?
   c. Do we want a society where there is no stress? Explain.
2. Why do some people feel more comfortable in stressful situations than in non-stress situations?
3. a. How can stress be a good thing?
   b. Name situations where you have benefited from stress.
   c. Name a situation in which you might cause stress because you think it will be helpful to someone.
   d. Name situations where people cause stress without knowing that they are causing stress.
4. Considering that we <u>do</u> live in a stressful society what are ways in which we can deal with stress? (exercise, meditation, drugs, alcohol, athletics, TV, etc.)

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: David Bishop
Martha Beenken

# JUSTICE

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is justice?
2. Give examples of justice.
3. What is injustice?
4. Give examples of injustice.

**Personalize:**

1. Among what people would you expect justice to be practiced?
2. Is justice something that students can practice?
3. Where would students practice justice?
4. What would be some cases of students being unjust?
5. What would be some cases of students being just?
6. What rules in this school would you consider just?
7. What rules in this school would you consider unjust?
8. What determines whether the school rules are just?
9. What determines whether the school rules are unjust?
10. Have you recently been involved in a case of injustice?
11. What were you about to do about it?
12. How was the outcome just or unjust?
13. How do you go about making an unequal situation just?
14. Where is there room for more justice?
15. How are flexibility and justice related or unrelated?
16. How does justice work in your family?
17. How is being fair related or unrelated to justice?
18. How is the idea of being "fair" often abused?
19. How is the cry for "justice" often abused in the news?
20. Have you seen cases of people crying for "justice" when they merely want the advantage to work their way?
21. How are you just in your relations with friends?
22. How are your teachers just in handling problems and people in class?

**Challenge:**

1. What do you do, and what steps do you take, to right an injustice?
2. How do you appeal to a person who is being unjust to you?
3. What is a common reaction to injustice?
4. Why is not getting your own way not really a case of injustice?
5. Who are some people in history made the objects of injustice?
6. How were the following cases good illustrations of injustice:
   a. Blacks in labor
   b. Blacks in the Civil War
   c. Jews in Germany
   d. Americans in Iran
   e. Christians in Russia
   f. A white student not admitted to school because he was white (ratio)
7. List some of injustices you see today and rank them:
   a. Local
   b. National
   c. Personal

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Keith Hall

# PEER PRESSURE

**Warm-up Activity:** Would you consider yourself a leader or a follower?

**Objectives:**

1. To become aware of how peer pressure can affect the roles we play.
2. To realize that peer pressure can lead us in doing things that may not be acceptable to society.
3. To realize that it takes special qualities and a strong will to fight peer pressure when we feel the action of our friend or a group would be wrong.

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**

1. What is peer pressure?
2. What are some of the pressures that friends can exert to influence us?
3. Can you name some good things that friends do to influence you?
4. Can you name some bad things that influence you?
5. Are most people influenced by peer pressure?
6. Why can a group/groups influence ideas and behavior?

**Personalize:**

1. In what ways have you been influenced by peer pressure or group pressure?
2. What things have you done as a result of pressure from your friends?
3. Is it easier for you to go along with group pressure or oppose group pressure?
4. What are the most common situations of group pressure that affect you. Personally, the most?
5. Have you ever used pressure on friends to support your ideas or actions?
6. What kinds of personal consequences may occur if you resist your friends' ideas?

**Challenge:**

1. If you strongly disagree with group pressure, what will you do to resist it?
2. What kinds of personal strengths does a person need to possess to stand up for his/her ideas?
3. How many of you are willing to stand up for your principles even though all of the other people are against you?
4. Are there currently any people who resist the pressure of a large group or society?
5. Are you willing to make your individual values system stronger than group pressure?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Keith Hall

# MARRIAGE

Warm-up Activity: What do you think is the best age for people to get married?

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a marriage?
2. Why do people get married? Should all people marry? Why?
3. What are good reasons for not getting married?
4. What are some responsibilities of marriage?
5. What makes a good marriage?
6. What makes a bad marriage?

Personalize:
1. How do you feel about a couple living together outside of marriage?
2. What would you feel if you were living with someone outside of marriage?
3. What do you feel are the similarities and differences in the relationship between couples that are married versus couples that are not married but living together?
4. What would you do to try to make your marriage successful?
5. What responsibilities do you feel women have in a marriage?
6. What do you think are men's responsibilities in a marriage?

Challenge:
1. What can be done to better prepare people for marriage?
2. What can be done to help marriages that are not working very well?
3. What can be done to help insure a happy, successful marriage?
4. Should people living together outside of marriage receive different treatment than married couples?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Keith Hall

# PERSONAL STRENGTHS

**Warm-up Activity:** Look at the person on your right and give me what you feel is his/her most important strength.

**Objectives:**

1. To become aware of the types of strengths that we may have that can be used to improve our lives.
2. To become aware that the use of certain strengths in a positive way can help us improve and overshadow our weaknesses.
3. To help each person improve his self-concept.

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**

1. What is meant by strength?
2. Does everyone have the same strengths?
3. Describe some strengths you consider important.
4. Can personal strengths be abused?
5. Are strengths developed or naturally inherited?
6. What advantage is there for a person to develop his/her strengths?

**Personalize:**

1. What kinds of strengths that you have which you would consider to be good traits?
2. Can each of you come up with the strength you think is your most important strength?
3. What do you think is the most important strength a person should have?
4. What can you do so that you will not abuse your strengths?
5. What can you do to further develop and improve on your strengths?

**Challenge:**

1. What can you do to help others improve their strengths and use them wisely?
2. What can you do to use other people's strengths to help you be a better person?
3. What can other students and teachers do to encourage you to develop your personal strengths?
4. How can strengths be important to society?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for my particular group:

OPEN-ENDED CLASS MEETING IDEAS

Possible Topics for Elementary School Students

1. What would you do if you could no longer see?
2. If you were to plan a school lunch for all the children in school, what would be on the menu?
3. If you were to take a flight to a new planet, what would it be like?
4. What do first graders do? Sixth graders?
5. If I never see you again, how would I remember you? How would you remember me?
6. If you had two eyes in back and one in front, what would it be like?
7. What does a report card or progress report say?
8. What could happen if it always rained on Saturdays?
9. What could happen if you didn't know when to stop eating?
10. What could happen if it were against the law to sing?
11. What can you do with gum besides chew it?
12. What could happen if your father forgot where he worked one morning?
13. What would happen if your teacher forgot how to write?
14. If you were a lost dog, what might happen to you? What would your day be like?
15. If your desk could talk, what would it say?
16. If you met the kindest boy in the world, what would he be like?
17. If you were a pencil, what would you be like? What would you write? How would you feel when someone sharpened you?
18. What is your favorite television program?
19. If you could be 60 years old for one day, what would you do? What would you tell your friends who were still young?
20. If you found ten dollars, what would you do with it?
21. If you were given a castle, what would you do with it?
22. How have you used mathematics outside of school?

23. If you were the size of a dime, what would you do?

24. What could happen if you suddenly grew to the size of a tree?

25. What if letters were numerals?

26. If you could go anywhere in the world, where might you go?

27. What might you look like if you lived 1000 years from now?

28. Power to be an animal - which one would you be?

29. Teacher disappears - what could you do?

30. Plan a school. What would it be like?

31. If you could spend a day <u>in</u> a lake, what would you like to bring back from it?

32. You have a large piece of ground given to you. What would you put on it or do with it?

33. What can you teach a teacher?

34. Where do butterflies go when it rains?

35. What if 3 + 3 = 5; 7 + 1 = 2, etc.?

36. What does a principal do?

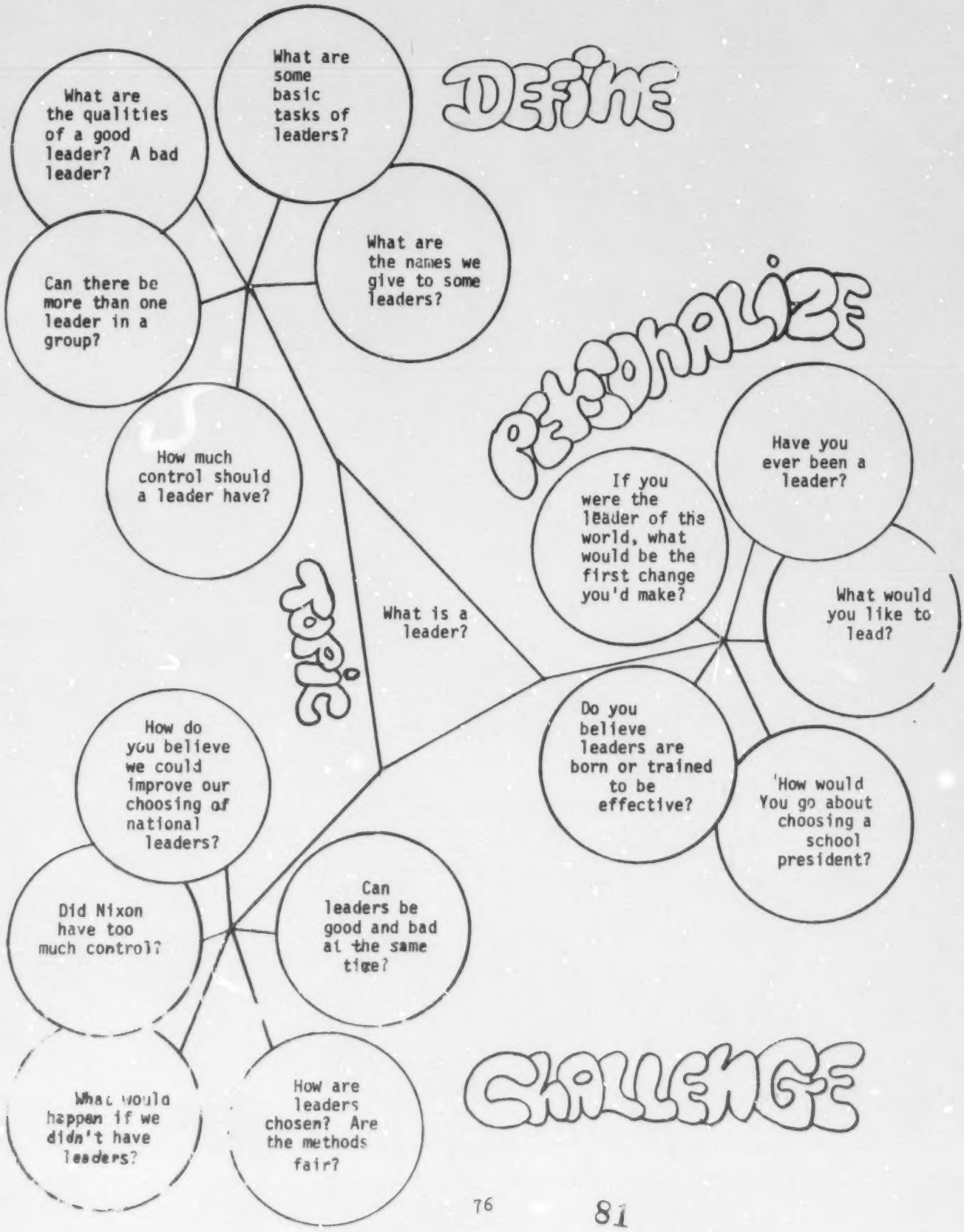
37. Drank magic potion - came to school invisible. What could you do? What problems?

38. You have just been informed that you have inherited a million dollars. What would you do with this new wealth if you were told you had to spend it all in one day?

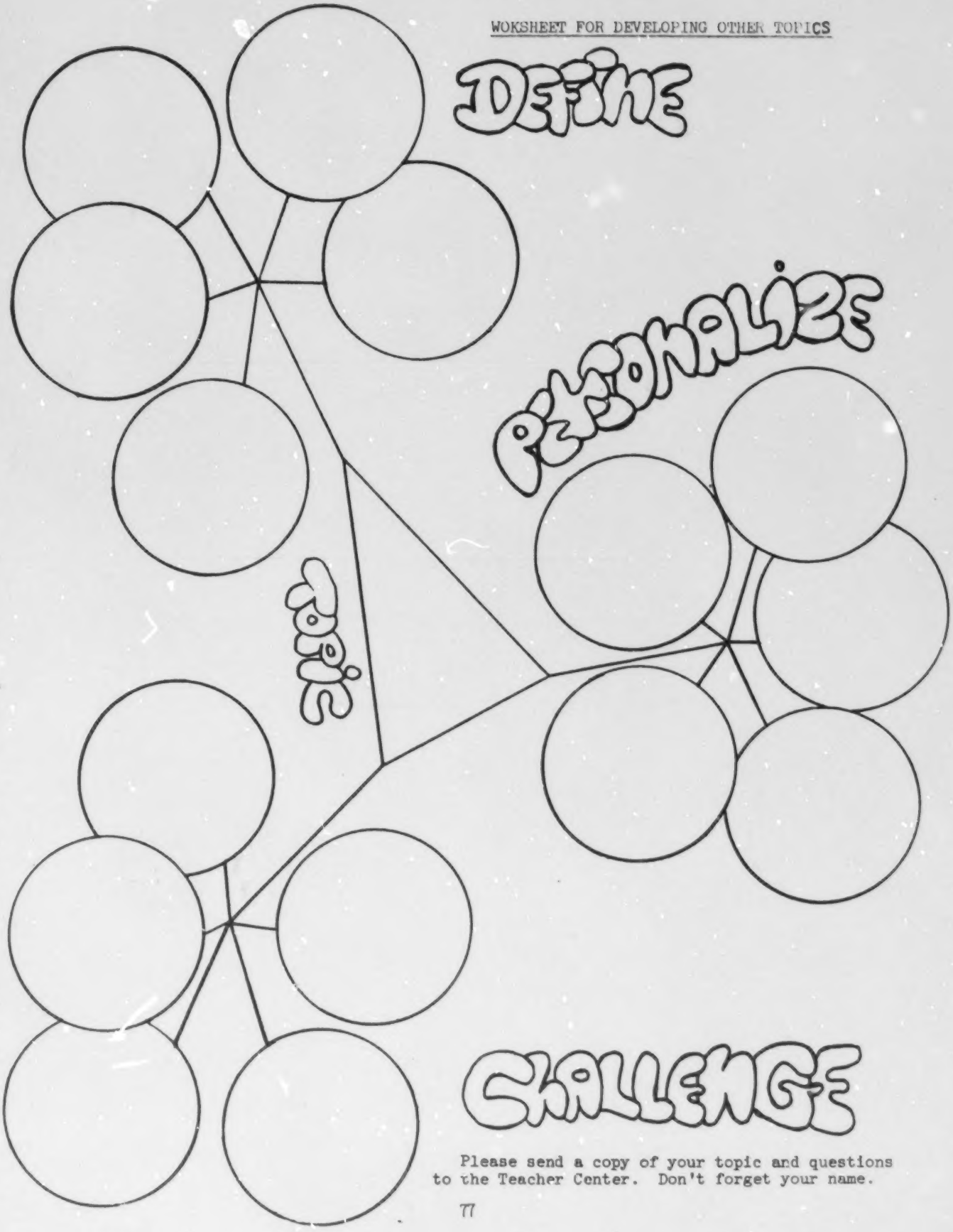
39. You have been doing errands for your next door neighbors while they are on a trip for two weeks. They return and bring you something in a long narrow box. What might this be and how would you use it? Would you like it?

Possible Topics for Secondary Students (including middle/junior high)

1. Should states have the death penalty for certain crimes?
2. Should the equal rights ammendment be ratified?
3. If you were in charge of TV programming in your area, would you eliminate violence?
4. Is student government effective?
5. If you were president what would be your priorities?
6. How can you get more students involved in school activities?
7. Does society condition us to have male or female roles?
8. Do you favor gun control?
9. How much do we need other people?
10. If you were superintendent, what would be your three main goals?
11. What role does music play in our lives?
12. What is the food chain? What if one link would be eliminated?
13. What is the school custodian job in this school?
14. What is homecoming? Who is it for?
15. Old age?
16. What do you think of the hospice idea?
17. How do chemicals contribute to our lives?
18. How do chemicals destroy things?
19. Factors in marriage?


DEFINE
What are some basic tasks of leaders?
What are the qualities of a good leader? A bad leader?
What are the names we give to some leaders?
Can there be more than one leader in a group?
How much control should a leader have?
PERSONALIZE
Have you ever been a leader?
If you were the leader of the world, what would be the first change you'd make?
What would you like to lead?
TOPIC
What is a leader?
Do you believe leaders are born or trained to be effective?
How would You go about choosing a school president?
How do you believe we could improve our choosing of national leaders?
Did Nixon have too much control?
Can leaders be good and bad at the same time?
What would happen if we didn't have leaders?
How are leaders chosen? Are the methods fair?
CHALLENGE

WOKSHEET FOR DEVELOPING OTHER TOPICS




Please send a copy of your topic and questions to the Teacher Center. Don't forget your name.

SECTION II

# CLASS DISCUSSION TOPICS

Developed and field-tested by teachers in Area Education Agency 7:

William Cashman - Denver
Robert Davis - Dike
Richard Frevert - Denver
Fran Gohlke - Denver
Clara Hudson - Denver
Hubert Kopriva - Dike
Lowell Kuecker - Denver
Leonard Larsen - Denver
Beverly Leonard - Denver
Irene Martin - Grundy Center
Randy Ruiter - Denver
Lois Saylor - Grundy Center
Burt VanAuken - Denver
Stan VanHauen - Dike

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3712 Cedar Heights Dr., Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613

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TEACHER CENTER
2201 E. Mitchell Avenue
Waterloo, Iowa 50702

Contributed by: William Cashman
Randy Ruiter
Burt Van Auken

# P.A.C. CHARTER

Suggested Questions:

Define:
1. What is a charter?
2. What does a charter consist of?
3. What are some famous charters?
4. How is a charter similar to a student handbook?

Personalize:
1. How does a charter make it easier for people to coexist?
2. We have to get along for a period of time each week. How would you like to be treated during this time?
3. What should be included in this charter?
4. What should be done if provisions in the charter are broken?

Challenge:
1. Write up a charter appropriate for your group.
2. Decide if the provisions in the charter are in agreement with the wishes of the group.
3. Further discuss any parts of the charter and make amendments if necessary.
4. When students are prepared to sign their names to the charter, explain the significance of this agreement.

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: William Cashman
Randy Ruiter
Burt Van Auken

# NUCLEAR POWER

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is nuclear power?
2. What is radiation?
3. What is radiation poisoning?
4. What is radiation waste?
5. What is a nuclear accident?
6. What is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission?
7. What is a melt down?
8. What is the China Syndrome?
9. What is the future of nuclear power in our society?
10. What is America's opinion on nuclear power?
11. What is the chief advantage of nuclear power?
12. How do people show their fear of radiation?
13. What are mutations and how are they related to nuclear power?

**Personalize:**

1. What is your opinion of nuclear power?
2. How do you feel about Schlesinger's statement on nuclear power?
3. Why are people so worried about radiation?
4. How do you feel about the Plant in Palo?
5. What effect could this plant have on your life?

**Challenge:**

1. How has America's opinion on nuclear power changed since the Three Rivers Incident?
2. How could you stop the building of nuclear power?
3. What if there was an explosion in another country?
4. Who should make the decision on nuclear reactors?
5. Why should we be concerned about nuclear plants?
6. What would happen if there was a melt down? How would this affect our world?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: William Cashman
Randy Ruiter
Burt Van Auken

# TRAITS OF FAMOUS PEOPLE

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. Who are some famous or very well known people?
2. What constitutes a famous person?
3. Can a famous person be a bad person?
4. Who are some infamous people?
5. What are some traits of famous people? Of an infamous person?

**Personalize:**

1. How do famous people affect our everyday lives?
2. What do individuals do to help make people famous?
3. Do you know of any famous people who project an image you disagree with?
4. Would you like to be recognized as a famous person? What would your life be like?
5. What leadership characteristics did Hitler have? What are the positive characteristics? What are the negative characteristics?

**Challenge:**

1. How many of you would like to become well known or famous?
2. How many of you would prefer to remain not too well known or only locally known?
3. How would you propose to become famous?
4. Is it easier to become well known by doing bad things (notoriety) or by doing "good" things?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: William Cashman
Randy Ruiter
Burt Van Auken

# IDEAL WORLD LEADER

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What does a leader do?
2. What type of people become leaders?
3. What type of people usually prefer not to become leaders?
4. What are some advantages of becoming a leader? Some disadvantages?
5. What would be some problems that a world leader would have to face today?

**Personalize:**

1. What characteristics would you look for in a world leader? What type of leader would you readily follow?
2. What type of leader would you be likely to not accept?
3. Does a leader have to be an individual? Can it be a group and if so name these types of group leadership.
4. Can you think of any leaders today who would have the characteristics needed for world leadership?
5. Are there any you can think of that you wouldn't want as a world leader? Why?

**Challenge:**

1. Create the ideal world leader!
2. Make a list of the characteristics you would like to see and the characteristics you feel to be undesirable wor a world leader.

**Brainstorming Session:** After the students have listed their characteristics, put these together and add and subtract characteristics until the students agree on the best overall leader.

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: William Cashman
Randy Ruiter
Burt Van Auken

# EUTHANASIA "MERCY KILLING"

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is euthanasia?
2. What is the difference between killing and "mercy killing"?
3. Under what conditions is mercy killing used?
4. What are the legal responsibilities of the doctors?
5. Who is legally responsible for making the final decision?
6. Is abortion mercy killing?

**Personalize:**

1. If you were terminally ill, would you prefer your life to be prolonged by machines?
2. What are some cases you know about that euthanasia was considered?

**Challenge:**

1. What would happen if you could choose the day you are to die?
2. What are acceptable circumstances for euthanasia?
3. Who do you think should make the decision in euthanasia?
4. Would age make a difference in an euthanasia decision?
5. Would euthanasia or a natural death be easier on the family?
6. How long should you wait before you make the decision?
7. Is it acceptable to practice euthanasia at birth because of a physical deformity?
8. Is it acceptable to practice euthanasia at birth because of severe mental retardation?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: William Cashman
Randy Ruiter
Burt Van Auken

# PHYSICAL APPEARANCES

**Warm Up Activity:**

Each person shall receive a blank piece of paper. On their paper they will write the answer to the following question: What physical feature do you feel people notice as soon as they meet you?

*You may then write each response on the board or state the responses. (No names)

Discuss: How many of these are positive? How many are negative? Why did people respond as they did?

**Define:**

1. How do people feel about their bodies?
2. Why is there so much emphasis on the beautiful body?
3. Where do people learn notions about their bodies?
4. What are some beautiful parts of the body?
5. Where are the ugliest parts of the body?
6. Why is it hard for people to accept their bodies?
7. What items concerning physical appearance can be changed?
8. What items are necessary to accept?
9. Why do people make decisions about someone's worth on the basis of appearance?
10. What items are on the market for improving physical appearance? Why are they so popular?

**Personalize:**

1. What changes would you like to make concerning your body?
2. How often do you discuss physical appearances with friends? Why is this an important topic to many people?
3. How do you relate to people who conform to your feelings about body appearance? To those who don't conform?
4. Whan have you felt envy toward another person and their appearance?
5. How do you feel when people knock your body?

Challenge

1. How can people change their attitudes toward physical appearances?
2. How could you help a person who has negative feelings concerning their body?
3. What would life be like if we all looked the same?
4. What product would you develop to improve physical appearance? Why?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

## INTRODUCTION

The following is a sequence of activity/discussions that helps the group progress from non-threatening topics to higher risk topics. The emphasis is upon identifying one's uniqueness within a group setting, developing and accepting individual, and creating a tolerance and appreciation for differences that are inherent in a world made up of individuals. The sequence begins with trying new food and proceeds to trying new behavioral patterns.

Developers of this sequence:

| | |
|---|---|
| Stan Van Hauen | Dike High School |
| Lowell Kuecker | Denver High School |
| Beverly Leonard | Denver High School |
| Fran Gohlke | Denver High School |

## NON-THREATENING ACTIVITIES

### What Is Your Name?

Warm Up Activity: Have students sit in pairs. Ask each to share responses to the following questions:

My full name is_____.

People usually call me_____.

When I was young, my nickname was _____.

I liked (or disliked) my nickname because_____.

The name I prefer to be called by now is _____.

If I could change my name, I would change it to_____.

Discuss the reasons for the above answers.

## NON-THREATENING ACTIVITY

Warm Up Activity: Have the class pair off. If an odd number of students, as a leader, become involved with the odd number.

Each member selects an item from his or her wallet, purse, pocket, notebook, folder, or packet which has special meaning. Each shares why it has a special meaning.

Purpose: To acquaint each person with each other.

## NON-THREATENING ACTIVITY

"If I could visit any place in the world,
it would be _____".

Read this statement to the participants. Ask each participant to complete the statement.

Then ask each to write out a reason why each person wants to visit the place of his/her choice. Then have each student respond to the statement.

Students will need pencil and paper for this activity.

## NON-THREATENING ACTIVITY

### "People I Would Like to Meet"

We have all wanted to meet some important people of the world. If you could meet with any five famous persons of the world, living or dead, who would they be? List the five.

Whip around the class sharing why each would want to meet these famous persons.

Alternative: List five people, regardless of fame, whom you would like to meet. Explain.

List five famous women you would like to meet.

Students will need paper and pencil for this activity.

## NON-THREATENING ACTIVITY

"If I could, I would invite _____ to my party"

Leader: "A host or hostess must organize a guest list for a party so that those who are to attend will get along well together. Suppose that you are able to give a party at which five famous people are going to attend. Select five famous people who would be friendly and get along with each other at your party."

Provide time to develop the best. Then have the group share the lists giving reasons why they feel these five people would be good guests.

Students will need paper and pencil for this activity.

5-7 minutes to make lists.

1-3 minutes per participant.

## NON-THREATENING ACTIVITY

Interview: Famous Person:

If I could interview any person in the world, living or dead, famous or not, he/she would be_____.

I would ask this person the following questions. List 3-5 questions you would want to ask this person.

Students will need paper and pencil for this activity.

5-7 minutes per participant.

Share with the class.

FOOD

Warm Up Activity: Group leader is responsible for bringing new foods such as artichoke hearts, anchovies, smoked oysters, bean sprouts, bamboo shoots, etc. Each student will be given an opportunity to sample small portions.

Suggested Questions

Personalize:

1. Have you ever been afraid to try something new? When?
2. Tell about a time when you were afraid to try a food and finally worked up the courage.
3. If you have tried a new experience, how would you feel afterwards?
4. Is there an activity that you really enjoy that you wouldn't be doing now if you hadn't tried something new?

Challenge:

1. Can you think of anything you would like to do but you were either afraid or didn't have the opportunity?
2. Why should people try new things?
3. Why are people afraid to try new things?
4. If a friend is afraid to try something, how would you help?
5. What would life be like if people were afraid to try new things?

Below is work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group.

# EXCLUSION

Warm Up Activity: This activity should be used after the members are acquainted with each other. This activity might "shake" a few of the excluded members.

As the group enters, separate students into majority and minority groups. Eye color, hair differences, or arm bands could be the means for determining groups. The minority group must set outside of the circle and be denied the treat or special privilege of the majority group. A treat of food or gum would work effectively. Then bring the group together for discussion.

## Suggested Questions

Define:

1. What does exclusion mean?
2. Are there different kinds of exclusion?
3. What forms can exclusion take?
4. How do you exclude people?

Personalize:

1. How did it feel to be in the majority? In the minority?
2. What did it feel like to be excluded?
3. Before this experience, have you observed someone being excluded?
4. Have you ever been excluded? Describe it.
5. What do you do when you see someone being excluded?
6. Have you ever excluded anyone? Explain.
7. When are students excluded in class? In activities?
8. Have you felt excluded during school?

Challenge:

1. Why do people exclude?
2. Is it a strength move or weakness move to exclude? Why?
3. What can you do not to exclude others?
4. How can you tell when others are excluded from a group?
5. What are the consequences of exclusion of people?
6. What would the world be like if there were no exclusions?
7. Is exclusion of a person necessary?

# WALKING IN OTHER SHOES

Warm Up Activity: Students will be given the opportunity to experience being blind, being deaf, being paralyzed, being left handed, being a minority, etc.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a handicapped person?
2. What are some types of handicaps?

Personalize:
1. Have you known anyone with a handicap?
2. How are they treated differently?
3. What do we do to make their life easier?
4. How can handicapped people be beneficial?
5. How can handicapped people be bothersome?

Challenge:
1. What if our environment was built for a handicapped society? (e.g. everything was suited for a blind society.)
2. Have you ever been handicapped for a short period of time? (e.g. in traction)
3. Should handicapped people be granted special privileges or be treated like everyone else?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

# BEING DIFFERENT

Warm Up Activity: Choose a day in which each person of the group can dress in an unusual attire. Each person should try to make notes of the comments both pro and con that were given toward them.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What does it mean to be different?
2. In what ways are people different?
3. Are there good reasons for being different?

Personalize:
1. Do you know people that are different?
2. How do you feel toward people that are different?
3. Would you like to be different?
4. Do you feel it is good to be different?

Challenge:
1. What would the world be like if people were the same? (I.Q.)

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

NON-CONFORMIST

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a non-conformist?
2. What are characteristics of a non-conformist?
3. When does a non-conformist become wierd?
4. Is a non-conformist always a non-conformist?

Personalize:
1. Do you know a non-conformist?
2. How do you feel toward a non-conformist?
3. Have you ever done something different? If so, how did others react? Yourself?

Challenge:
1. What are the values of a non-conformist?
2. What would our world be with (and/or) without non-conformists?
3. Is non-conforming rebelling?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group.

# HEAD BAND SIMULATION

Warm Up Activity: The teacher makes cards with phrases such as: I cheat, I lie, I'm dirty, I'm friendly, I'm cool, I smell, I'm deaf, I steal, I'm happy, I'm kind, I'm trustworthy, etc. The cards are made into head bands then displayed so the person wearing it cannot see the phrase. The students will interact with each person in the group.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What kind of person were you in the activity?
2. What are your characteristics?
3. What does your sign say?

Personalize:
1. How does it feel to be_____?
2. How did you treat the person who was_____?

Challenge:
1. How would your behavior change toward a person who_____?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group.

# A STRONG PERSON

**Purpose:** Students will be challenged to distinguish behaviors that determine a strong person.

**Warm Up Activity:** Read the following story to the group:

Once upon a time there was a new student wandering and lost; he could not locate his locker. It was easy to see by that bewildered look on his face that he was new. Student A moved down the corridor with his usual group of friends; "Hey, look at that lost turkey!" he called as the group moved by. Student B noticed the lost, new student from afar. As he approached, Student B turned his face to the floor and passed him quietly. Student C noticed the new student, walked toward him, said "Hi," and asked if he could show him around. The new student found his locker and....

Let the students finish the story. Discussion should center around, "What relationships will develop from this situation?

**Suggested Questions**

**Define:**
1. What is a strong person?
2. What is a weak person?
3. How do we acquire our strengths?

**Personalize:**
1. Do you know someone that has shown strength by doing something different?
2. Have you ever done something you consider a sign of strength?
3. What is the most important strength a person can have?
4. Can we abuse our strengths?
5. Is fighting or not fighting a sign of strength?

**Challenge:**
1. What can we do to improve our strengths?
2. Could our group show a sign of strength by greeting people first for a week?
3. What difference would this make in the lives of others?
4. How would this change our lives?

Extended Activity:

If the group has developed, it may want to consider and put into action one of these special activities:

- Helping the elderly
- Visiting the elderly
- Clean up community
- Clean up school
- Help needy families
- Plant trees
- Develop a plan for helping new students

The students may develop or implement other activities that meet the needs of the school or community.

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

SELF-CONCEPTS AND VALUES

Purpose: Students will be forced to make a decision between two competing alternatives. Students have to examine their feelings and their self-concepts and values.

Warm Up Activity: Teacher asks students to make a choice and to move to the side of the room which will represent their choice. The teacher asks an either-or question like: "Which do you identify with more?" or "What characteristics do I identify with?" Each student then finds a partner on the side he has chosen and discusses with him/her the reasons for their choice.

After two minutes of discussion, students will be given another choice between two alternatives. This may be repeated with five or six questions. The students should choose a new partner each time.

Suggested Questions

Define:

1. Which do you identify with more, A Volkswagon or a Cadillac?
2. Are you more of a loner or grouper?
3. Are you more like a rose or a daisy?
4. Are you more like summer or winter?
5. Are you more like patent leather or suede?
6. Are you more like a gourmet or a MacDonalds?
7. Are you more like the country or the city?
8. Are you more like a leader or a follower?
9. Are you more like clothes or a kite string?
10. Are you more like New York City or Colorado?

Personalize:

1. Did you find any new characteristics about yourself?
2. What characteristics do you have in common with others in the group?
3. What characteristics do you have that are different from others in the group?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Stan Van Hauen

# PEER GROUPS

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a peer group?
2. What are peers?
3. What are some different peer groups?
4. What are some other terms for peer group?

**Personalize:**

1. Do you belong to a peer group?
2. What are your peer groups?
3. What do you think of the peer groups around you?
4. How much pressure do you feel from your peer group?
5. Who are your peers?
6. How do you become a part of a peer group?
7. How do you know when you are a part of a peer group?

**Challenge:**

1. Are peer groups all right?
2. Why are peer groups important?
3. Are peer groups more important to some people than to other people?
4. What would happen if we did not have peer groups?
5. How do people leave peer groups?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Stan Van Hauen

# HATS

Warm Up Activity: Show up wearing an unusual hat. Ask the participants what they think is the purpose of the hat.

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a hat?
2. What kind of hats are there?
3. What do hats symbolize?
4. What are the materials used to make hats?

Personalize:
1. When do you wear a hat?
2. Do you have a favorite hat? Why?
3. Out of all the hats you have seen, what is your favorite kind of hat?
4. If you were designing a hat, what would it be?

Challenge:
1. What can a hat tell us about the wearer?
2. How can a hat identify the wearer?
3. Who should wear hats?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Stan Van Hauen

# HOMECOMING

Warm Up Activity: Have you ever attended the homecoming at _____?

Define:
1. What is homecoming?
2. How do you suppose it started?
3. Are there different kinds of homecoming?
4. How are reunions and homecomings alike? How are they different?

Personalize:
1. Have you ever attended a homecoming?
2. What do you like or dislike about homecomings?
3. If you were planning a homecoming, what would be included in your plans?

Challenge:
1. What can be done to improve Homecoming at _____?
2. Who should be permitted to attend a homecoming?
3. Some schools have homecoming in the summer. What advantages or disadvantages does this have?
4. When should homecoming be held?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Hubert Kopriva

GETTING TO KNOW YOU BETTER

Activities: Interview:

Leader introduces activity by stating:

"I'm going to pair you up and then you are to find out as much information as you can about your partner. When you report back to the group, you will give information about the individual that you're going to introduce so that the group can remember this person by associating the information with him or her."

"The final challenge will be to try to remember something about each person in the group."

Contributed by: Hubert Kopriva

# JANITOR

Suggested Questions

Define:
1. What is a janitor?
2. What do they do?
3. When does a janitor work?

Personalize:
1. Who is our janitor?
2. What would you like to do that a janitor does?
3. What wouldn't you like to do that a janitor does?
4. What would you need to know to be a janitor?

Challenge:
1. What can you do to help our janitors?
2. Is it the janitor's job to clean up after you?
3. What role do they play in making our school a good place?
4. What would happen if nothing in the way of janitor work was done for a week?

Below is work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Hubert Kopriva

# PEACE

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is peace?
2. How many different kinds of peace can you think of?
3. Give examples of peace.
4. What are some symbols of peace?

**Personalize:**

1. What makes you feel peaceful?
2. Name ways of creating peace in the family, school?
3. Why is it necessary to have peace of mind?
4. What makes peace of mind and peace in the world different?
5. Why do some people have more peace of mind than others?
6. Who should have control of peace of the world?

**Challenge:**

1. What could you do to bring about your own peace of mind?
2. What could you do to bring about other people's peace of mind?
3. What could nations do to bring peace within their own borders?
4. How would peace make life easier?
5. How could peace be detrimental?

Below is work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Hubert Kopriva

# SCHOOL BUS DRIVER

**Warm Up Activity:**

1. Invite bus driver in class discussion.
2. Observe bus inspection.
3. Discuss similarity of conduct in classroom as to conduct on school bus.

**Define:**

1. Who are the school bus drivers?
2. What do they do?
3. When are they on duty?
4. Are there different kinds of bus drivers?
5. What are the responsibilities of a bus driver?

**Personalize:**

1. Who are our bus drivers?
2. Can they be of different sex, age?
3. What would you like to do that a bus driver does?
4. What wouldn't you like to do that a bus driver does?
5. What would you need to know to be a bus driver?
6. What are some ways the bus driver is like a teacher?
7. Why should you listen to what the bus driver tells you?
8. What is your duty (as a passenger) to the bus driver?
9. When is it crucial that you not distract the driver?

**Challenge:**

1. What can you do to help our bus drivers?
2. How can bus drivers become better and safer drivers?

Below is work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Hubert Kopriva

# BUS SAFETY

**Warm Up Activity:**

1. Invite Iowa Highway Patrol to talk.
2. Invite bus drivers to come to discussion.
3. Observe bus insprction day.
4. Visit with superintendent.

**Define:**

1. What is bus safety?
2. What should be included in bus safety?
3. When and where should bus safety take place?
4. Are there different kinds of bus safety?

**Personalize:**

1. What kind of rules should you have on your bus?
2. Should there be different rules for a moving bus?
3. Should there be different rules for extra-curricular activities that use buses?
4. Should the bus driver be the only one that enforces the rules?
5. Who should be instrumental in making the bus safety rules?
6. Should there be different rules for different age levels?
7. Is it necessary to have a seating chart?
8. What responsibilities should the bus driver have?
9. Is it necessary to have the buses inspected?
10. Name the people that would be involved with bus safety.

**Challenge:**

1. What if each bus driver would make up his own rules?
2. What if the buses weren't inspected for safety by proper authority?
3. What if there were no rules on buses?
4. What can we do to help improve behavior on buses?
5. What can we do to prevent accidents to happen on buses?

Below is work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Robert Davis

# CHARADES

## Suggested Questions

**Define:** Purpose of this exercise is to facilitate group cohesiveness by having the participants discover they can actively participate without fear of rebuttal or being put down by others in their group.

**Personalize:**

1. Each group member will draw a charade out of a hat or container.
2. After everyone has had a chance to draw, choose a volunteer to act out the charade listed.
3. Before the participant starts the leader should ask for a review of what is acceptable as responses to the charade being given. This should be generalized to the rules of discussion groups set up in the first meetings of the year.
4. As the charade is being acted out, the group will try to guess what the charade is.
5. It is permissible for the person acting to signal the group whether or not their guesses are correct or incorrect.
6. The leader may facilitate order by requiring answers in group to raise their hands before responses are made.

**Challenge:** List of possible charades to use:

1. Child lost at a fair
2. A cheerleader
3. A guy asking a girl for a date (or vice versa)
4. Mother or father saying no to a request from one of their children
5. Musical band director
6. Traffic policeman
7. Stranger asking for directions
8. Burglar
9. Sherlock Holmes solving a mystery
10. Frankenstein monster
11. Beggar trying to get money
12. Baby learning to walk
13. Butterfly
14. Basketball official
15. Movie star

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Robert Davis

# ALLIGATOR RIVER

**Warm Up Activity:** Values Clarification using story, "Alligator River". In order to do this exercise, a copy of "Alligator River" must be read to the group. Copies may be obtained from the book, Values Clarification.

**Define:**

1. Leader must introduce story. Students will need a pencil and paper to rate the five characters in the story, "Alligator River".
2. Students should listen to story and try to identify with the five characters in the story.
3. Remind students procedure for how to agree or disagree with people inside discussion group. This story can be explosive in personal reactions.
4. Read the story with the purpose of each student rating each character in the story. Rate each character from most favorite to least favorite, 1-5 respectively. Make sure to allow time for thought about characters and ratings.
5. Go through each character in the story, getting a group concensus of which character was liked the most. Make sure each student establishes why they rated each character the way they did.
6. Go through and ask how each character was rated. Students should be encouraged to agree or disagree with reasons given in group. Arguments may occur and should be allowed if a debate starts to happen. (Values of the group may start to show as characters are rated.)
7. Be sure to challenge group responses as a leader to get a debate or controversy started. Your role is to be a devil's advocate. Reasons for rating characters should be challenged.
8. Go through characters seeing which character was liked the least. Challenge why each character was disliked.

Personalize:

1. If you had to choose to be one of these characters, which one would you choose to be? Why would you choose this character?
2. If you were one of these characters, what would you do "to change" this character to make the character better.
3. If you were like one of these characters, how would you change to become a better person?

Challenge:

1. What do you think each character did wrong? Why?
2. Do you think Abagail should have been forgiven by Gregory for stealing the transistor radio?
3. Do any think it was all right for Abigail to steal?
4. Was it all right for Sinbad to make Abigail steal for him as payment to take her across?
5. Should Ivan just turn his back and say "I don't want to be involved".
6. What would the world be like if everyone were like Ivan?
7. Do you think Gregory should have depended upon Abigail so much for repairing his own glasses?
8. Should Gregory have forgiven Abigail?

Below is work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Robert Davis

# ACCIDENT REPORT

**Goal:** To show how rumors can get stretched out of proportion with different lines of communication.

In this exercise the leader is trying to illustrate to the group what a rumor is and how a rumor can get changed with different lines of communication.

**Warm Up Activity:** Take one student out in the hall and describe to them an accident that has taken place. Each participant from the discussion group will get a chance to hear the accident report from the person who was out in the hall before them. The last student in the hall will report back to the group the final outcome to the accident report. (To save time do not allow students to discuss the report when in the hall. Just tell the description of the accident.)

**Define:**

1. Discuss how the accident report changed through the participation of each member in the group.
2. Have members in the group point out changes that took place in the accident report as they heard the story repeated.
3. How is this accident report like a rumor?
4. What is a rumor?
5. What kind of people are targets for rumors?

**Personalize:**

1. Have you been effected by a rumor? Could you tell us about what happened and how you felt?
2. Have you ever been effected by a story which had been changed from the original true story?
3. How did the rumor get started and how did the rumor change?
4. Have you ever been a part of a rumor?
5. How do you feel toward people who start rumors?

Challenge:

1. How can you put an end to rumors?
2. (Without mentioning any names) Are there any rumors that you would like to see put to an end?
3. If you heard any rumors today, what would your reaction be?
4. With all the discussion today, how can this discussion be applied to the rules of our discussion groups?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Richard Frevert

# TELEPHONE

**Warm Up Activity:** Take one student aside from the group and relate to him/her a report from an accident (hypothetical) that has just occurred. Using settings familiar to the student, such as main street in their town, will help the student to remember details. The first student that you talked to then calls another student from the group aside and relates the story to him/her. The process continues until all students in the group have heard the story. The last student to hear the story then retells the version that he heard to the entire group. The leader then reads the story in its original version and a comparison is then made between the original and the version given by the last student. Discussion from here can go into the idea of how stories get exaggerated when retold several times, and then proceed into a discussion of rumors using the questions below:

**Define:**

1. What is a rumor?
2. How are rumors started?
3. Are rumors harmful? Why?

**Personalize:**

1. Who is involved in rumors?
2. Have you ever been the victim of a rumor?
3. Have you ever been a participant in a rumor?
4. Without mentioning any names, are you aware of any rumors right now?

**Challenge:**

1. How can rumors harm people if not stopped?
2. What can you do to stop the spread of rumors?
3. What can the school or teachers do to stop the spread of rumors?

Contributed by: Clara Hudson

GROUPS

Warm Up Activity

I. Group leader should present the following situation to the group:

Rick and Ann have purchased a new home, landscaped their yard, and installed play equipment for their children.

The neighbors, a popular couple, have a big Lab dog who is creating problems. Although the dog is harmless, he wakes Rick up on weekends when he would like to sleep. Some of the shrubs have died because of the dog and the yard has to be cleaned at least once a week.

Rick and Ann do not want to be known as grouches. They have developed a friendship with the neighbors and do not want to offend them, but something has to be done about the dog.

II. Give each person a copy of the following courses of action:

1. Rick should talk to the husband - not make a big deal of it, just bring it up casually.
2. Ann should talk to the wife, also casually - perhaps bring it up over a cup of coffee.
3. Rick and Ann should build a fence around the yard.
4. Make a "production" of chasing the dog away every time it comes in the yard - maybe the neighbors will get the hint.
5. Do nothing. Just continue cleaning up the yard and accept the dog as one of life's irritants.
6. Rick and Ann should get a dog of their own and train it to keep other dogs out.
7. Rick and Ann should write the neighbors an anonymous letter.

III. Have each person join a group whose choice of action corresponds with his/her own. Each group should pick a leader to debate

in favor of the small group's opinion and try to persuade members of other groups to change. After each group leader has expressed the group's stand, allow people to change alliances (physically change to a different group) if they wish.

Define:

1. What is a group?
2. Name some different types of groups.
3. What are some groups that are considered "good" by society?
4. What are some groups that are considered "bad" by society?
5. Why do they exist? What need do they answer?

Personalize:

1. Name some groups to which you belong. (age, job, racial, family, athletic, religious, etc.)
2. Can you think of an instance when a group influenced you?
3. When you influenced a group?
4. Can you think of an instance when you resisted a group's influence?
5. In what group have you been the most active (a contributor)? Why?
6. In what group have you been the least active (non-contributor)? Why?

Challenge:

1. What might happen at school if there were no "organized" groups?
2. What would happen if there were a school rule forbidding the formation of groups?
3. Do you think it would be possible to enforce such a rule? Why or why not?
4. What do you think holds a group together?
5. What do you think contributes most to a group breakdown?

Additional Challenge

In relation to the situation we read earlier:

1. Once you chose a course of action and joined a group, did you feel more "sure" about your choice?
2. Did you wait to see how many people joined a particular group before you "made your move?"
3. During the debate, were you trying harder to persuade others to think your way than you were trying to understand or "hear" what the opposition was saying?

4. Did you have a feeling of competition - that you were in a "contest" to get the most people in your group? If so, how did that affect your listening? Your behavior?
5. Did your experiences as a dog-owner, neighbor, male, female, etc. affect your attitudes and/or behavior?
6. Did you discover anything about group influences that you can apply to real life?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Clara Hudson

# GROUP COMMUNICATION

Goal: To illustrate the importance of communication in a group. (You can't develop closeness if "messages" are not being sent and received.)

Warm Up Activity:

I. Break into small groups of 4 or 5 persons. Each group should have a "sender", a "receiver", and observers.

II. Place a barrier between sender and receiver so there is no eye contact, no facial expression and no gesture visible. Observers can see both sender and receiver but may not help or communicate in any way (no gestures, verbalizing, facial expressions, etc.)

III. Sender must give verbal instructions to receiver to arrange dominoes in the order illustrated. The receiver may not talk or ask quesitons in any way. The sender cannot see what the receiver is doing.

IV. When this exercise is finished (allow a set amount of time - 5 to 10 minutes - depending on time available), discuss the following questions:

Suggested Questions

Define:

Senders:
1. How did you feel about not being able to check progress?
2. How did you feel about not having any feedback whatsoever?

Receivers:
1. How did you feel about not being able to ask questions?
2. Did you try to "read" the observers?

Observers:
1. Were you aware of the other groups' progress?
2. Did you want your group to "win"?

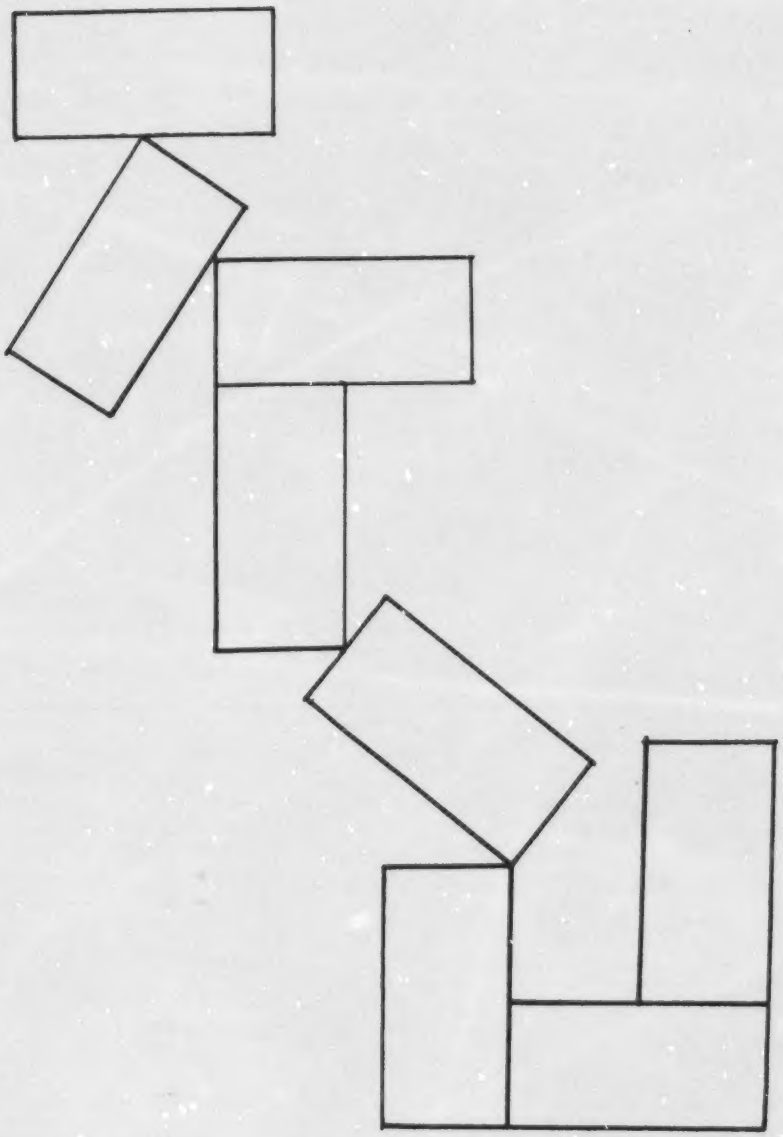
3. If so, how did you feel about not being able to help?
4. If there had been no "competition", would you have felt the same way about not being able to help?

Personalize:

1. Can you think of some things you may have done before the game started to help your group win?
2. How could you have organized the instructions to accomplish more in a shorter time?
3. What ways could you have developed to describe the necessary domino connections?
4. What happens to group accomplishment when there are too many silent "observers"?
5. What can you do as a "sender" to help your group move forward? What can you do as a "receiver"?
6. Are you often an "observer" in your group? Is it sometimes necessary to be one? When?

Below is work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group. On the following page is the domino arrangement.

GROUP COMMUNICATION - DOMINO ARRANGEMENT



Contributed by: Lois Saylor
Irene Martin

# SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a principal?
2. What does a principal do?

**Personalize:**

1. What is the name of our principal?
2. Do you think a principal should be a man or a woman?
3. When have you talked with the principal?
4. How often do you see the principal?
5. When you see the principal, do you speak first, or do you wait for him/her to speak first?
6. How old do you think our principal is?
7. Do you think he/she is too young or too old?

**Challenge:**

1. We have cooks, custodians, secretaries and principals in our school. Because of the lack of money to pay salaries we have to eliminate one of the jobs, which one of the jobs would you eliminate and why?
2. If you were the principal, what would you do for the students in our school?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Lois Saylor
Irene Martin

# SCHOOL LUNCH ROOM

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is the purpose of the lunch room?
2. What is waste?

**Personalize:**

1. How do you waste food served in the lunch room?
2. What are some of the reasons you throw food away?
3. What kinds of food do you throw away?
4. Who do you think wastes the most food, elementary students, junior high or senior high students?
5. What is done with the garbage?
6. How much food do you throw away at home? How does it compare with the food you throw away at school?

**Challenge:**

1. What could you do to waste less food?
2. What could be done with the garbage?
3. Pretend you are a scientist, you are inventing a way to use wasted food as a new energy source. How could you do this?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Irene Martin
Lois Saylor

# SCHOOL CUSTODIAN

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a custodian?
2. What does a school custodian do?
3. When do the custodians work?
4. What supplies and equipment do the custodians need?

**Personalize:**

1. Who are the school custodians?
2. What things have you seen the custodians do?
3. What do you do to help them?
4. What do the custodians do to help you?
5. Name the things the custodian has done to help you today.
6. What does the custodian do during the summer?

**Challenge:**

1. Have a student interview the custodian and report back to the group. The group could help the student by listing questions they want answered.
2. The group could invite the custodian to the classroom for a discussion about his/her job.

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Irene Martin
Lois Saylor

# SCHOOL SECRETARY

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a school secretary?
2. What responsibilities and skills does a school secretary have?

**Personalize:**

1. Where does our school secretary work?
2. Who is our school secretary?
3. What does the school secretary do for you?
4. How does the school secretary help adults?
5. Why is it necessary for our school to have a secretary?

**Challenge:**

1. The school secretary has just been called away and you have to take his/her place. What things would you do first?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group.

Contributed by: Irene Martin
Lois Saylor

# SCHOOL COOKS

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a school cook?
2. What does a school cook do?
3. When do the school cooks work?

**Personalize:**

1. What are the names of the school cooks?
2. What do they do for you?
3. What do you do to help them?
4. Where do they get the supplies they use?
5. What are some of your favorite foods prepared by the cooks?

**Challenge:**

1. What would you do if you were a cook for one day in our school?
2. Have one of the cooks come to the group for an interview.

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group:

Contributed by: Irene Martin
Lois Saylor

# NEW STUDENT

## Suggested Questions

**Define:**

1. What is a new student?
2. What are the circumstances that determine someone is a new student?

**Personalize:**

1. Who has been a new student?
2. What feelings did you have as a new student?
3. What things would you experience as a new student?
4. What have you done to help a new student?
5. What activities helped you get acquainted when you were a new student?
6. Do you speak to new students first or do you wait for them to speak first? Why?

**Challenge:**

1. What could you do to help a new student?
2. What could adults (faculty, principal, custodians, cooks, bus drivers, etc.) do to welcome a new student?
3. What activities could we initiate to help new students in our school?

Below is a work space for additional or other questions appropriate for your particular group.

Contributed by: Irene Martin
Lois Saylor

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU BETTER

Activity: Good for beginning the year!

I. Interview

A. Hold a discussion with the group to make sure they understand how to have an interview.
B. Leader pairs up students.
C. Discuss possible questions to ask during the interview.
   1. What is your name, address and age?
   2. Who are the people that live in your home?
   3. What jobs do the members of your family have outside your home?
D. Give the interviewers a specific time to interview their partners (about 3 minutes).
E. Have the partners reverse roles and the new interviewers ask questions of their partners.
F. Each student then introduces their partner to the entire group and tells what he/she learned about them.

II. Group leader then asks group what they remember about each member of the group.

Contributed by: Clara Hudson

## BROKEN SQUARES

Taken from "A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training" by John E. Jones and J. William Pfeiffer. (University Associates Press, Iowa City, Iowa 1969)

Goals: 1. To analyze certain aspects of cooperation in solving a group problem.
2. To sensitize the participants to some of their own behaviors which may contribute toward or obstruct the solving of a group problem.

Group Size: Any number of groups of six participants each. There will be five participants and an observer/judge.

Time Required:

Fifteen minutes for the exercise and fifteen minutes for discussion.

Materials Utilized:

- Chalkboard, chalk, eraser
- Individual tables that will seat 5 participants
- One set of instructions for each group and one for observer/judge
- One set of broken squares for each group of five participants

Physical Setting:

Tables should be spaced far enough apart so that the various groups cannot observe the activities of the other groups.

Process: The facilitator may wish to begin with a discussion of the meaning of cooperation; this should lead to suggestions by the groups of what is essential in successful group cooperation. These may be listed on the board, and the facilitator may introduce the exercise by indicating that the groups will conduct an experiment to test their suggestions. Basic suggestions which the facilitator may want to bring out of the group are as follows:

1. Each individual must understand the total problem.

2. Each individual should understand how he can contribute toward solving the problem.
3. Each individual should be aware of the potential contributions of other individuals.
4. There is a need to recognize the problems of other individuals, in order to aid them in making their maximum contribution.

Instructions are as follows:

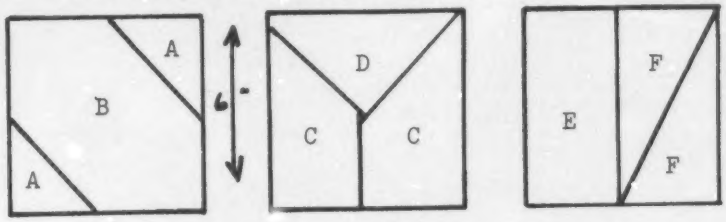
A. When the preliminary discussion is finished, the facilitator asks each group to distribute the envelopes from the prepared packets. The envelopes are to remain unopened until the signal to work is given.
B. The facilitator distributes a copy of the instructions to each group.
C. The facilitator then reads the instructions to the group, calling for questions or questioning groups as to their understanding of the instructions. It will be necessary for the facilitator or his assistants to monitor the tables during the exercise to enforce the rules which have been established in the instructions.
D. When all the groups have completed the task, the facilitator will engage the groups in a discussion of the experience. Discussion should focus on feelings more than merely relating experiences and general observations. The facilitator may want the groups to relate this experience with their "back home" situations.

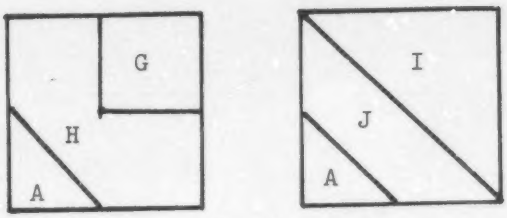
BROKEN SQUARES

DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING A SET OF SQUARES

A set of five envelopes containing pieces of cardboard which have been cut into different patterns and which when properly arranged will form five squares of equal size. One set should be provided for each group of five persons.

To prepare a set, cut out five cardboard squares of equal size, approximately 6" x 6". Place the squares in a row and mark them as below, pencilling the letters a, b, c, etc., lightly, so that they can later be erased.




The lines should be drawn so that when cut out, all pieces marked a will be on exactly the same size, all pieces marked c of the same size, etc. By using multiples of three inches, several combinations will be possible that will enable participants to form one or two squares, but only one combination is possible that will form five squares 6" x 6".

After drawing the lines on the 6" x 6" squares and labeling them with lower case letters, cut each square as marked into smaller pieces to make the parts of the puzzle.

Mark each of the five envelopes A, B, C, D, and E. Distribute the cardboard pieces in the five envelopes as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Envelope A | has pieces | i, h, e |
| B | has pieces | a, a, a, c |
| C | has pieces | a, j |
| D | has pieces | d, f |
| E | has pieces | g, b, f, c |

Erase the pencilled letter from each piece and write, instead the appropriate envelope letter. This will make it easy to return the pieces to the proper envelope for subsequent use when a group has completed the task.

## INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GROUP

In this packet there are five envelopes, each of which contains pieces of cardboard for forming squares. When the facilitator gives the signal to begin, the task of your group is to form five squares of equal size. The task will not be completed until each individual has before him a perfect square of the same size as that held by others.

Specific limitations are imposed upon your group during this exercise:

1. No member may speak.
2. No member may ask another member for a card or in any way signal that another person is to give him a card.
3. Members, may however, give cards to other members.

Are the instructions clear? (Questions are answered)
Facilitator gives signal, "Begin working."

## INSTRUCTIONS TO THE OBSERVER/JUDGE

Observer: Your job is part observer and part judge. Make sure each participant observes the rules?

1. No talking, pointing, or any other kind of communicating among the five people in your group.
2. Participants may give pieces to other participants but may not take pieces from other members.
3. Participants may not simply throw their pieces into the center for others to take; they have to give the pieces directly to one individual.
4. It is permissible for a member to give away all the pieces to his puzzle, even if he has already formed a square.

Do your best to strictly enforce these rules.

As an observer, you may want to look for some of the following:

1. Who is willing to give away pieces of the puzzle?
2. Did anyone finish their puzzle and then somewhat divorce himself from the struggles of the rest of the group?
3. Is there anyone who continually struggles with his pieces but yet is unwilling to give any or all of them away?
4. How many people are actively engaged in mentally putting the pieces together?
5. Periodically check the level of frustration and anxiety - who's pulling their hair out?
6. Was there any critical turning point at which time the group began to cooperate?
7. Did anyone try to violate the rules by talking or pointing as a means of helping fellow members solve their puzzle?

Contributed by: Leonard Larsen

# FALLOUT SHELTER EXERCISE

This exercise is good for developing interactions in the small group process. Your large group should be divided into small groups of four to five. Each group should be given only one copy of the exercise to work with. Results can be recorded on the black board. This will help stimulate large group discussion.

## Exercise

In this exercise the following situation is explained to the participants:

Those in your group are members of a federal department in Washington, D.C. that is in charge of experimental stations in the far outposts of civilization. The Third World War has suddenly broken out and bombs are beginning to drop. Places all across the world are being destroyed. People are heading for whatever fallout shelters are available. You receive a desperate call from one of your experimental stations asking for help. At the station are ten people, but there is only room in the nearby fallout shelter for six. They have decided to abide by your decision as to which six persons can go into the fallout shelter.

You have only superficial information on the ten people. After your group has made its decision it will try to reach its own fallout shelter. You realize that the six people you choose to go to the shelter may be the only six people left to start the human species over again. The choice, therefore, is crucial. You have half an hour to make your decision. If you do not make the decision within the thirty minutes allowed, all ten will die.

Here is what you know about the ten people:

1. Bookkeeper, thirty-one years old
2. His wife, six months pregnant
3. Black militant, second-year medical student
4. Famous historian-author, forty-two years old
5. Hollywood starlet, a singer and dancer
6. Biochemist
7. Rabbi, fifty-four years old
8. Olympic athlete, all sports
9. College coed
10. Policeman with gun (they cannot be separated)

After each group has determined their rankings, record them on the chalkboard and then ask them to share their reasons. When other groups have different rankings, ask for the points of disagreement.

Contributed by: Leonard Larsen

## WINTER SURVIVAL EXERCISE: THE SITUATION

You have just crash-landed in the woods of Northern Minnesota and Southern Manitoba. It is 11:32 a.m. in mid-January. The light plane in which you were traveling has completely burned except for the frame. The pilot and co-pilot have been killed, but no one else is seriously injured.

The crash came suddenly before the pilot had time to radio for help or inform anyone of your position. Since your pilot was trying to avoid a storm you know the plane was considerably off course. The pilot announced shortly before the crash that you were 80 miles northwest of a small town that is the nearest known habitation.

You are in a wilderness area made up of thick woods broken by many lakes and rivers. The last weather report indicated that the temperature would reach minus twenty-five degrees in the daytime and minus forty at night. You are dressed in winter clothing appropriate for city wear - suits, pantsuits, street shoes, and overcoats.

While escaping from the plane, your group salvaged the fifteen items listed below. Your task is first to decide to stay put or move, and then to rank these items according to their importance to your survival.

You may assume that the number is the same as the number in your group and that the group has agreed to stick together.

Provide a handout of the following items for each group:

-Compress kit (with 28 ft., 2 in. gauze)
-Ball of steel wool
-Cigarette lighter (without fuel)
-Loaded .45 caliber pistol
-Newspaper (one per person)
-Compass
-Two ski poles
-Knife
-Sectional air map made of plastic
-30 feet of rope
-Family-size chocolate bar (one per person)
-Flashlight with batteries
-Quart of 85-proof whiskey
-Extra shirt and pants for each survivor
-Can of shortening

Your group should be divided up into small groups with only one copy of the exercise. The results should then be recorded on the black board.

Share the following information after each group's ranking has been recorded:

A survival expert has rated the items in this order of importance: 11, 2, 1, 10, 8, 15, 12, 9, 14, 7, 4, 6, 13, 3, 5. The group also should have decided to stay put. The steel wool and lighter can be used to start a fire. The shortening can be used for signaling. There is not enough gauze to be useful and the compass is useless since you are staying put.

This exercise is good for developing interactions in the small group process. Since it is non-threatening, it is a good small group exercise to help start off the year.

Contributed by: Leonard Larsen

ACTIVITY

Show the film, Cipher in the Snow (order No. 9147A).

Summary of Content:

Cliff Evans dies mysteriously. A teacher at his school is assigned to contact Cliff's family and to write his obituary. In the process of doing this, he discovers the details of Cliff's tragic life that lead to his untimely death.

In a flashback, the audience learns that an apparently normal Cliff cannot understand or accept the divorce of his parents. He finds no one with whom he can discuss his fears and anxieties. He becomes more introverted. As time goes on, he is thought of as a slow learner, a low achiever, who is dull, unmotivated, unskilled, and backward. His teachers, his parents, and his peers neglect him, and he begins to believe that he is really no better than what they think of him. In all this, no one recognizes the symptoms that finally lead to his lonely death.

The teacher who pieces together Cliff's story revolves to be more sensitive to those who may need love and attention.

Suggested Questions:

Define:
1. How did Cliff die?
2. In what ways was he ignored?
3. How was he like the snow man?
4. Did his parents and teachers have anything to do with his death?

Personalize:
1. How do you feel when someone calls you slow?
2. How do you feel when you're left out?
3. Has anything like this happened to someone you know?
4. How can you help the Ciphers of the world?

Challenge:
1. Why did the teacher talk to the boy at the end?
2. Why is it easier for some people to relate better to nature than other people?
3. Why do people need to be loved?
4. What can be done to help kids who are depressed, shy or withdrawn?
5. What have you done to help someone like this?

Supplementary Materials:

Films:

-"Johnny Lingo," and "Mirror, Mirror," produced and available from Brigham Young University. (The film, "Johnny Lingo" is an effective follow-up film to "Cipher in the Snow")

Books:

-Hansen, James C., and Maynard, Peter E. Youth: Self Concept and Behavior. Herman Peters (ed.) Columbus, Ohio: (Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1973)

-Purkey, William Watson. Self Concept and School Achievement. (Englewood Cliffs. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1970)

-Robert, Marc. Loneliness. (Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications, 1973)

-Rutter, Michael. Maternal Deprivation Reassessed (Harmondsworth England. 1972.)

Contributed by: Leonard Larsen
Clara Hudson

# SHOCK TREATMENT ACTIVITY

Objective: To develop group cohesiveness through an external threat.

Suggested Implementation:

For use to stimulate non-cohesive groups when growth appears stymied.

Activity: Prearrange to have an outside resource person come in and evaluate the group. The resource people can sit in the back for five to ten minutes and then stand up and announce his or her findings. Rating should vary low in such things as Response Rate, Sharing Rate, Depth Rate, Warmth Rate, Group Rate, Leadership Rate, and Creative Rate. Recommendations should be made to disband the group. The resource should make it clear that he/she is only doing his/her job and leave without answering any questions.

The teacher should allow 5 minutes for spontaneous student reactions. The teacher then can use directive questioning such as the following:

Define:
1. What were you thinking when he was talking?
2. What did he do?

Personalize:
1. How did you feel?
2. Did you agree with his ratings?
3. When did you do your best job?

Challenge:
1. How do you think you could improve as a group?
2. What do you think we could do?

Finish activity with acknowledgement of the set-up. Discussion should focus around the group teacher observations such as the use of "we" and improvement of the group in the future.